NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX

NEW MAGIC CARD ART!
We delve into the amazing 2019 set

FEATURING
PAUL SCOTT CANAVAN
CYNTHIA SHEPPARD
TYLER WALPOLE
LIVIA PRIMA
AND MORE

15 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR ART
WITH TRAN NGUYEN

ALSO INSIDE!
Behind the scenes at Games Workshop
Build an apocalyptic cityscape in 3D
Concept a deadly Total War beast

BE A BETTER
FANTASY ARTIST
Discover how to pose, draw and paint an ethereal beauty in Photoshop with **Tara Phillips**

BEFORE

AFTER

sharpen your fur & hair painting techniques see page 54

FUTURE

ISSUE 166

AliveColors

IMAGE EDITOR
ALL-IN-ONE

alivecolors.com

Welcome to…

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX

Welcome readers! You can't help but notice that this month's issue is an explosion of fantasy art's finest creators and genres! Inside the mag, you'll discover the skills behind the art of your favourite role-playing games, card art, fantasy board games, video games, miniature makers and more. I've had a riot putting this issue together for you all.

For one, I've long been an admirer of Tara Phillips' work and am so glad we finally got to work together on a cover. I'm also always flabergasted by the artistry that goes into making the art for a Magic card, so gaining insight into the process from art director Cynthia Sheppard was a real boon for me.

If you've read ImagineFX before, there's no doubt that you'll have heard our rallying cry reminding you to focus on painting what you love. This edition is packed full of artists and creatives doing exactly that. I'm sure you'll feel the passion and dedication emanating from every page. In turn, I hope that you get a chance to join them in painting or creating something today that really makes you happy. Enjoy!

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

EDITOR'S CHOICE
Three of my top picks this month…

38

Inside Games Workshop
Want to work for the giant of miniature makers? Then head straight on over to page 38.

68

Oils without the mess
Lovers of Corel's Painter rejoice! There's a new version and we show you how to get the best out of it.

104

The art of being Tran Nguyen
Who doesn't want to paint like Tran? Take a trip to page 104 to find out how she creates her work.

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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

Getting hold of this issue's videos and custom brushes is quick and easy. Just visit our dedicated web page at **https://ifxm.ag/fantasy166artist**

OVER 8 HOURS of video tutorials from pro artists to watch and learn from!

COVER WORKSHOP

33.33%

Layers Channels Paths

Kind

Color   Opacity: 100%

Lock: Fill: 100%

Hair

Face

Swatches

Layer 12

Body

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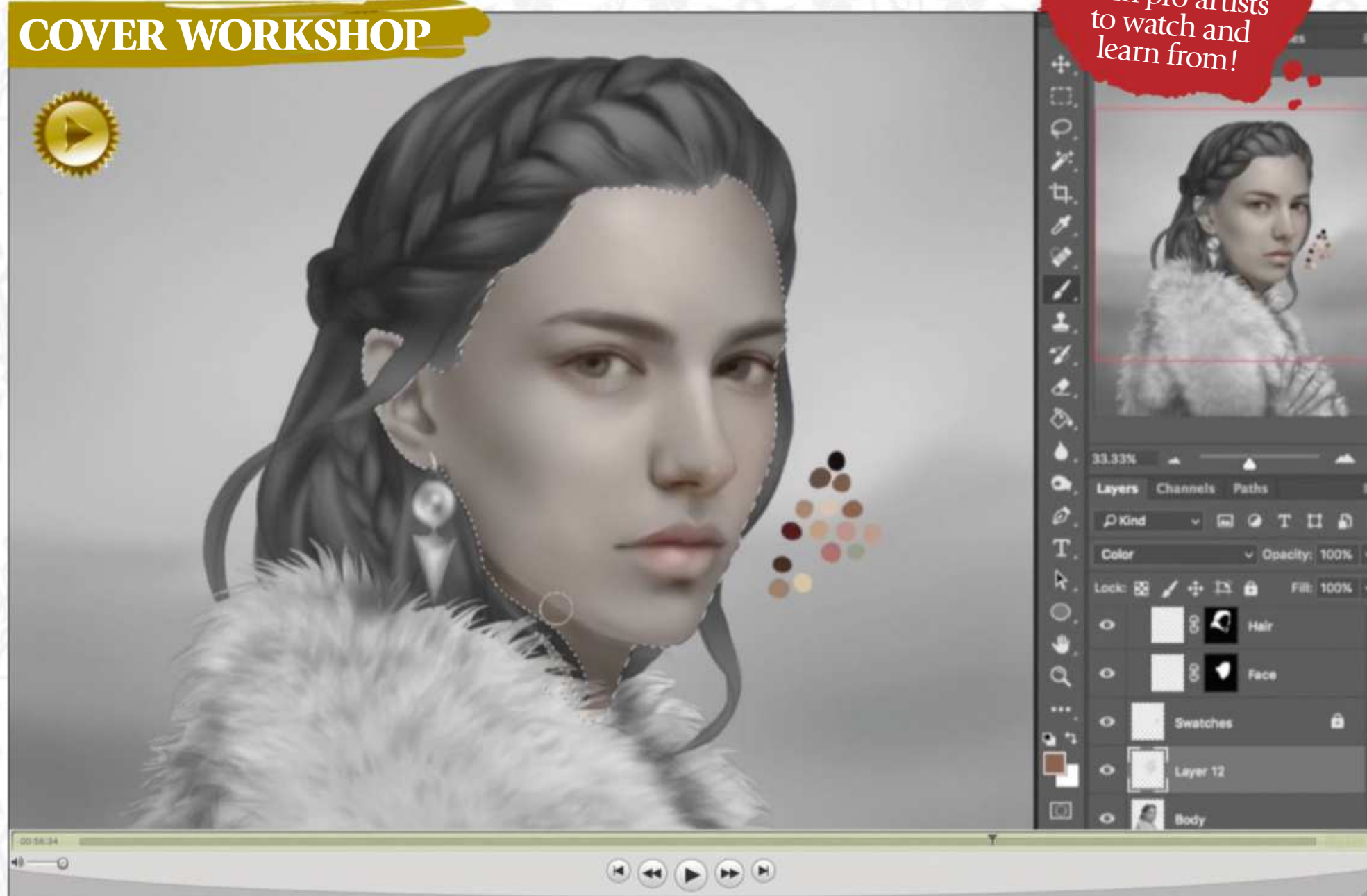
GET YOUR RESOURCES

You're three steps away from this issue's resource files...

1 Go to the website
Type this into your browser's address bar (not the search bar):
https://ifxm.ag/fantasy166artist

2 Find the files you want
Search through the list of resources to download.

3 Download what you need...
...or alternatively watch the videos on our YouTube page.

Strengthen your portrait skills

Watch as Tara Phillips applies her texturing and blending knowledge to create this month's cover art of an elven maiden on a walk in the mountains. Then read her workshop over on page 54.

WORKSHOPS

Get to grips with Corel Painter's digital oils
See Magdalena Proszowska digitally recreate the traditional look, then turn to page 68.
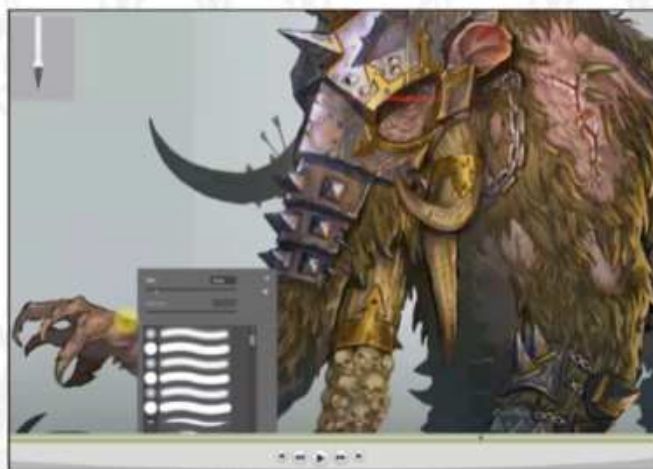
This creature workshop is a mammoth undertaking!
In Rinehart Appiah's video he concepts a design for Total War: Warhammer. More on page 62.

TRAINING

Compose a panoramic scene
An art duo paints a gaming screen on page 74.

Painting Animals From Life
We review James Gurney's video on page 95.

PLUS 10 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING..

FOG TEXTURE
A great atmospheric brush, from Luisa Preißler and Klaus Scherwinski's workshop.

FUR BRUSH
Tara Phillips used this brush to quickly paint the fur texture of the cloak that her elf character is wearing.
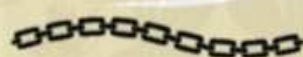
CHAIN BRUSH RINEHART
The chains that drape across the huge battle mammoth were quickly created with Rinehart Appiah's custom brush.

FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Daniel Ido

LOCATION: England **MEDIA:** Photoshop, ink **WEB:** www.danielido.com

Daniel always starts in line work, and loves using vibrant colours. "My work is a mix of things I like, ponder about, and art I actually finish," he says.

1 ISLE OF WES
"A fan art illustration based on the film Isle of Dogs. I used a Japanese woodblock print style, layering as if the design was traditionally printed, and texturing each layer."

2 TAKO
"In the original Old Boy film there's a scene in which Oh Dae-Su eats a live octopus. I thought, 'Well, that's an image I can make into something!', so I made the octopus into sushi."

3 TIGER MAGICIAN
"This design became first of a series on abuse in the animal entertainment industry. For most animals to be trained, they have to be abused in the background without people noticing."

島ケウェスアンダーソン

ISLE OF WES ANDERSON
danielido.com / @deardido
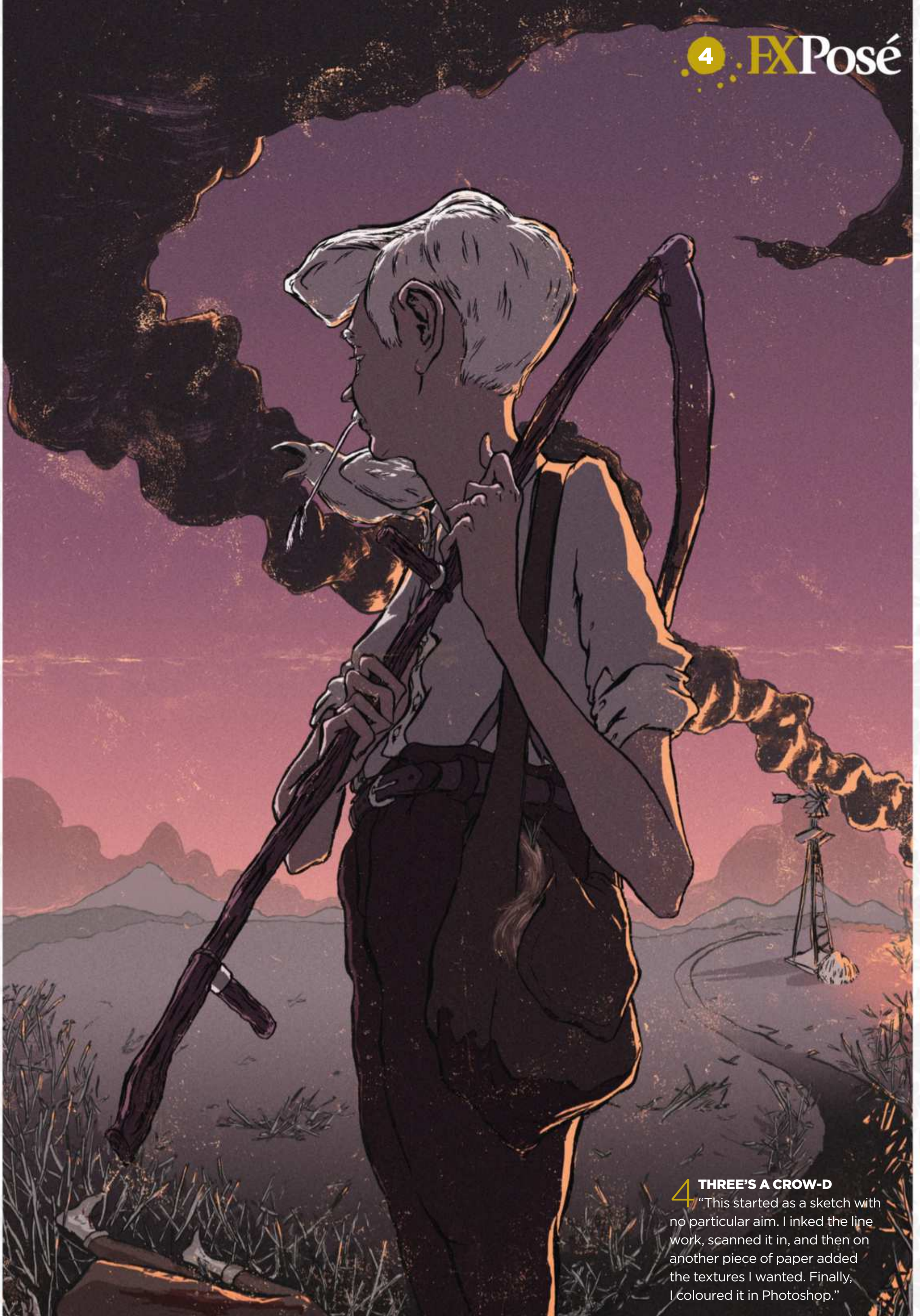
4 THREE'S A CROW-D
"This started as a sketch with no particular aim. I inked the line work, scanned it in, and then on another piece of paper added the textures I wanted. Finally, I coloured it in Photoshop."

Aaron Wolf

LOCATION: Australia **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Illustrator, pen, graphite powder **WEB:** www.awolfillustrations.com

Aaron grew up in a once-quaint town that fell into disrepair, surrounded by stunning landscape. "It's this juxtaposition of natural beauty and the modern cancerous sprawl that I bring into my artwork," he explains.

1 **A DELICATE BALANCE: THE KINGDOM**
"The Delicate Balance series explores the relationship between architecture and the natural world. Castles and fortified communities of fantasy and medieval influence coexist with and in nature."

2 **ANGEL OF DEATH**
"The gunner in an unknown, forgotten war is taken by the Angel of Death."

3 **A DELICATE BALANCE: THE TREEHOUSE**
"These scenes incorporate natural elements into the architecture of the structures. There is interaction and synchronisation with the natural world."

4 **REX BRUCUS HUNTS THE KOBA FLIEGE**
"On a distant planet, the king of the phosphorescent caterpillars successfully hunts a giant fly in the fungal forest, illuminated by luminescent light."

Filipe Pinto

LOCATION: Portugal **MEDIA:** Photoshop, 3ds Max, SketchUp **WEB:** www.filipepintoart.com

Filipe only discovered art in the entertainment industry about four years ago, but when he did he dropped everything else. "I love to create new worlds, new stories and imagine all the possibilities," he says.

1 A MARK OF WAR
"I produced this landscape painting for a personal science fiction project. I wanted to show how this once-beautiful planet was ruined by war between the different civilisations that were living on it."

2 CELTIC SANCTUARY
"Lately I've been looking at architecture, storytelling and cultural references from a different perspective. My overall aim is to explore patterns and shapes that really defined how a certain culture built things."

3 THE FIRST TREE
"This was a simple practice painting that told the tale of how an immense spaceship crashed on to a deserted, desolate planet. the vessel brought life with it and now the world is changing around it."

Want to submit your work? Visit http://ifxm.ag/getinifx

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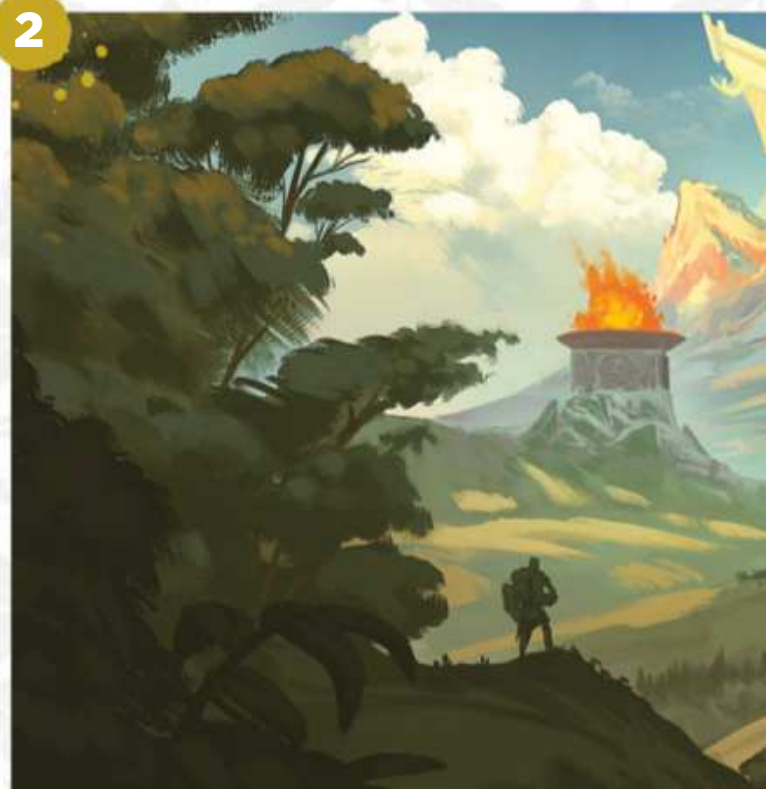
Charlie Reynolds

LOCATION: England **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.deviantart.com/charliemations

Charlie loves exploring the possibilities of digital art, and trying to capture interesting lighting and colours. She's inspired by Stanley Lau and Charlie Bowater.

1 SAND
"I tried to create a contrast between the more detailed face compared to the flat colours of the figure's hair."

2 PASTEL
"For this one I wanted to bring in a colour scheme of warm, pastel colours, introducing aspects of a colder green into the figure's hair."
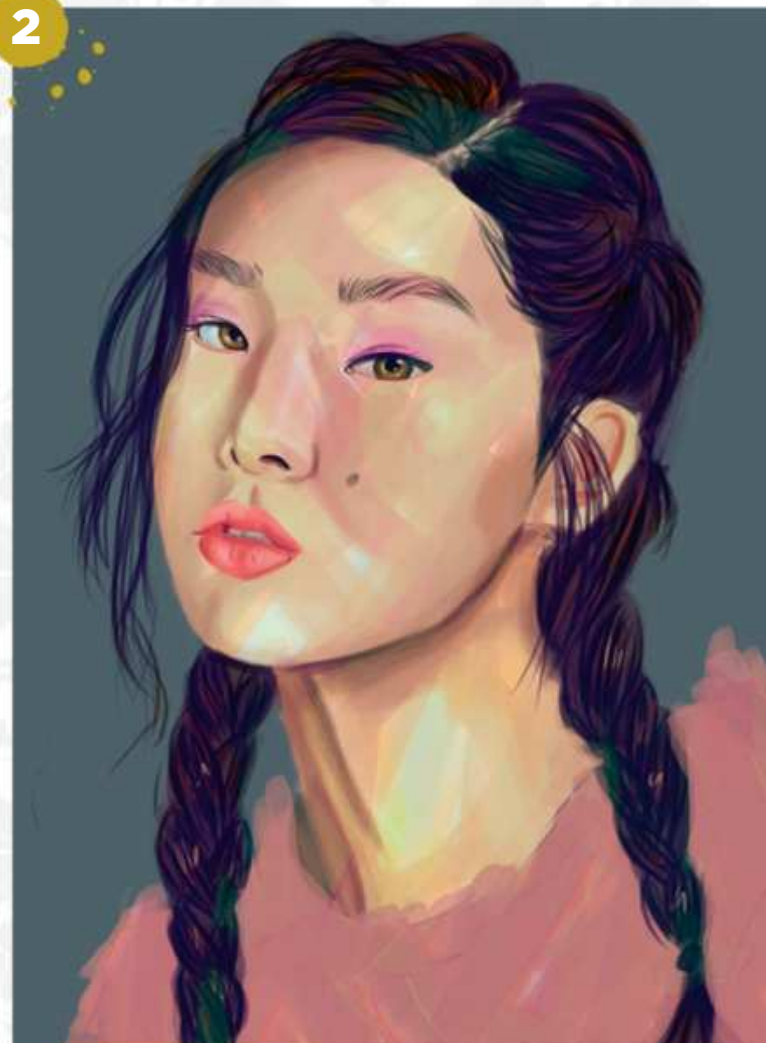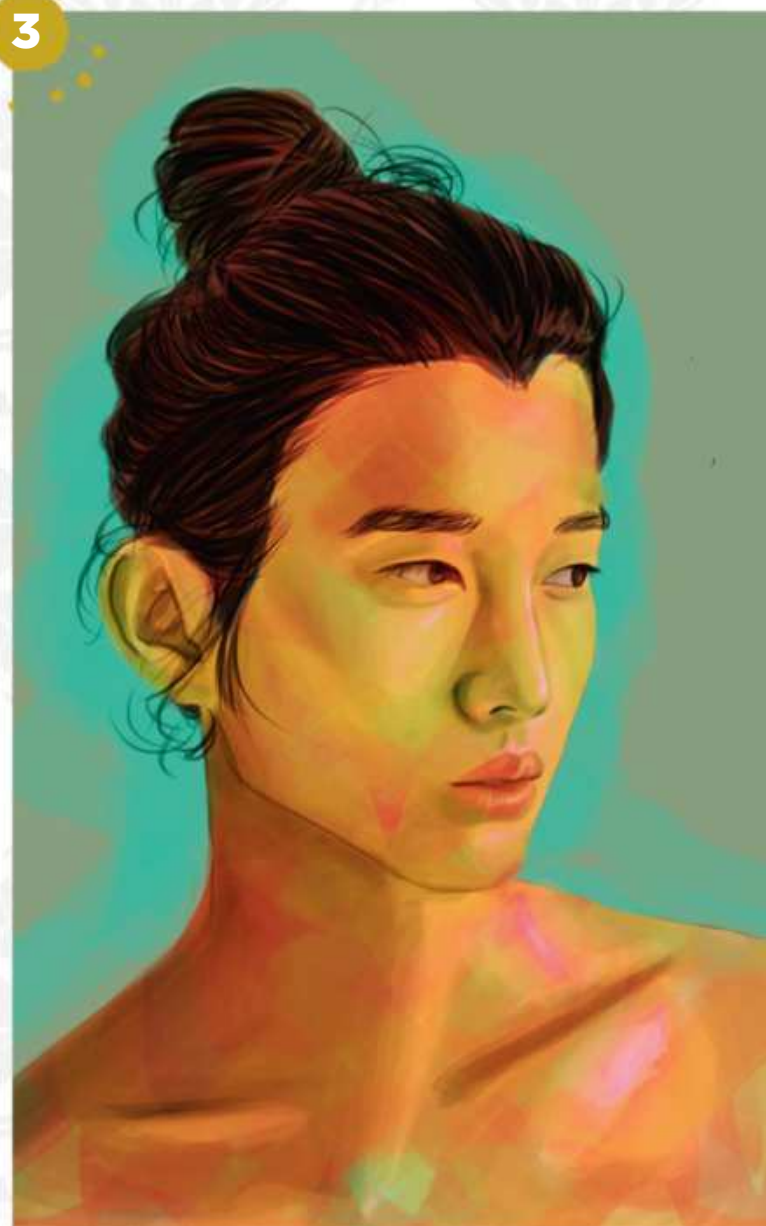
3 THE SUN
"I was really inspired by Alice X Zhang's work. I tried to experiment with the variety of shades of oranges and yellows I could include within just his skin."

Jari Leliveld

LOCATION: Belgium **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** www.artstation.com/odilion

Jari is an art student based in Belgium. "I'm passionate about civilisations and cultures, which heavily influence my work," he says. Jari dreams of being able to make a living as an artist, and is determined to make that dream a reality.

1 TRIBAL DANCE
"For this painting, I wanted to see if I could convey more movement in my work, and make the viewer feel like it was a moment frozen in time."

2 COMPANION
"I fell in love with the colours and the atmosphere of dusk. I wanted to paint something that conveyed what I feel at that time of day."

3 GUARDIAN OF THE LAST GOLD CITY
"This painting was inspired by a really good friend who went to live in Peru for a year. Plus, it's always fun to paint a lama!"

Alfie Garland

LOCATION: England **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Illustrator **WEB:** https://alfgarland.myportfolio.com

Alfie is an illustrator and designer who's living and working in London. "I'm inspired by stories of otherworldliness, but trying to push back on the contemporary emphasis on desolation," he explains.

1 ALLEYWAY

"I wanted to revisit an old character and warm myself up to the idea of creating a second comic. This piece uses a few new techniques, too."

2 BIRD MUSIC

"I really liked the idea of three friends who hang out and jam together in this weird virtual forest. I did the characters and background in different styles."

3 FISHING

"A repair crew fixes a data buoy. This design was inspired by travel photography and articles on nomadic software freelancers."

FXPosé

Sarah Buchholz

LOCATION: Germany **MEDIA:** Procreate, Photoshop, SketchUp **WEB:** www.papilio-art.com

Sarah describes herself as "almost obsessive" in her artistic approach, and her paintings always tell a distinct story. She's studying literature at Germany's University of Erfurt.
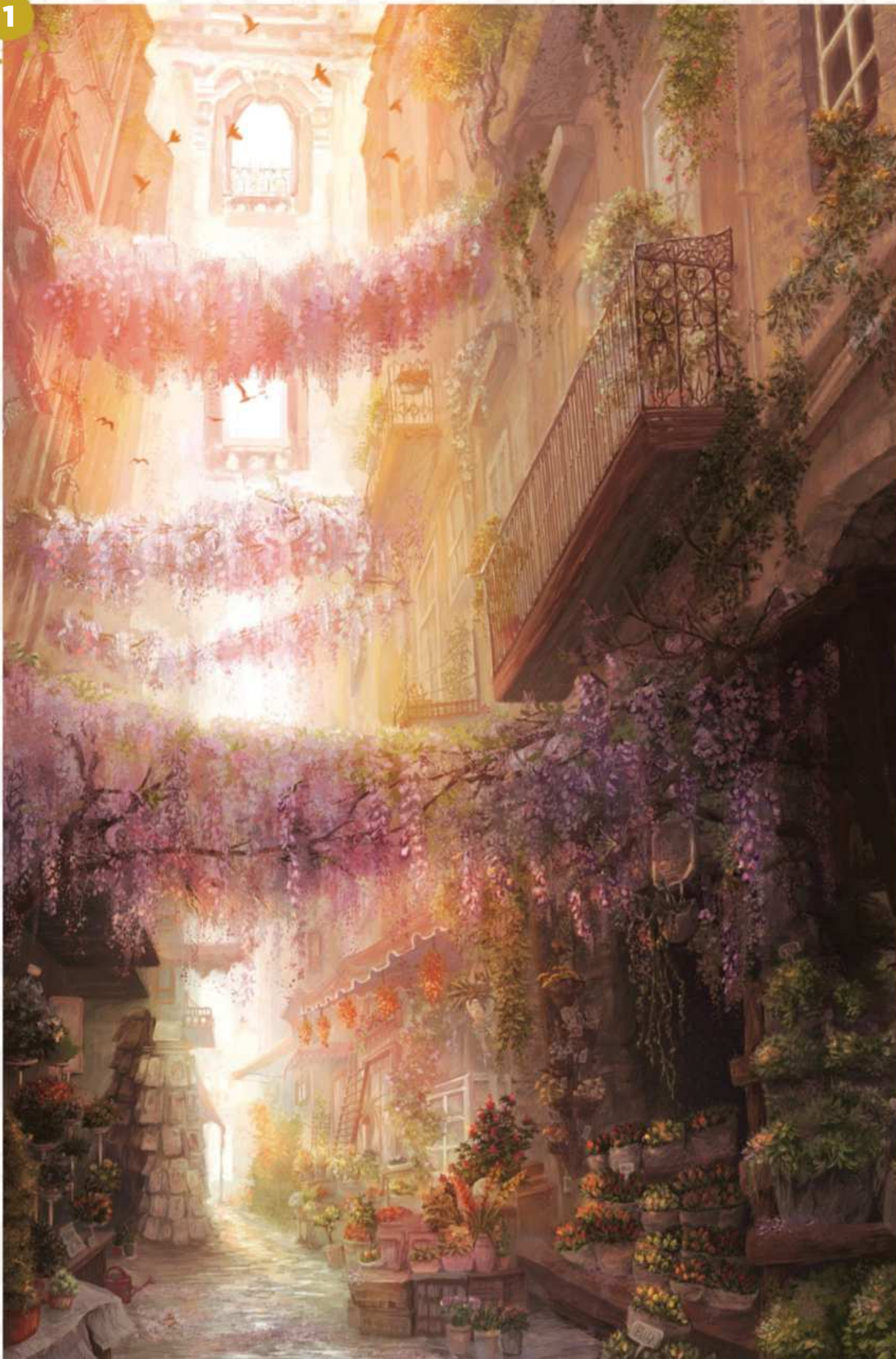
1 THE MARKET
"Inspired from the Flower Market in Amsterdam, this scene invites the visitor to dwell in the details. I chose not to paint any people because I wanted to emphasise the dreamlike atmosphere of the scene."

2 HOMETOWN GLORY
"I imagined my hometown of Görlitz in 200 years' time. A big catastrophe has taken place, and this painting reveals the beauty as nature gradually reclaims the area."

3 HIDDEN ACADEMY
"This artwork illustrates a location in a story I've been working on: the student accommodation of a secret university. The landscape is inspired by Tierra del Fuego and small Nepalese villages."

Chase Stone's Chromium, the Mutable is a look again card. When you notice the farmhouse in the foreground you realise how big the dragon is.

The new stars behind Magic: The Gathering

Hit the deck Cynthia Sheppard, art director at Wizards of the Coast, talks to **Garrick Webster** about Magic's: Core Set 2019, and we meet some of her new artists…

For the first time since 2015, Wizards of the Coast has released an annual Core Set of cards for Magic: The Gathering. The 2019 set is out now and it's bedding in with players as they get to grips with some very in-your-face creatures and spells. It also contains some exciting imagery and a selection of work from new artists to keep the fantasy card game's main themes as fresh as ever.

Over the past few years, M:TG sets such as Amonkhet, Ixalan and Dominaria have focused on settings and narratives based around historical and mythological themes. There have been pirate and dinosaur invasions, Egyptian-style gods and vampiric hints of horror. Core Set 2019 gets back to basics in many respects.

"We went into M19 with a goal of evoking classic fantasy that a variety of people know and love, regardless of whether they're long-time players, or are just picking up their first Magic cards," says senior art director **Cynthia Sheppard**.

THAT MEANS DRAGONS

In addition to the planeswalker Nicol Bolas – as seen in the game's hero art by Magali Villeneuve – four elder dragons come to the table including the impressive Chromium, The Mutable as illustrated by Chase Stone, and an array of lesser ones like Lathliss, Dragon Queen by Alex Konstad.

However, you never know where the best artwork is going to turn up in a ➤➤

Leading Magic: The Gathering artist Magali Villeneuve painted the hero artwork for Core Set 2019, featuring the planeswalker Nicol Bolas.

❝ We went into M19 with a goal of evoking classic fantasy that a wide variety of people know and love ❞

"You can't do fantasy without dragons," says Cynthia Sheppard. This is Lathliss, Dragon Queen by Alex Konstad.

In Dominaria, Wizards introduced Saga enchantments with the artwork lengthwise down the side. Vincent Proce created Chainer's Torment for that series.

➦ new set. Something as simple as Rustwing Falcon, a white card costing one mana, has an eye-catching silhouette as it's dropped by a player on their first turn. The artwork was painted by British artist Paul Scott Canavan who's new to the extensive Magic universe.

"Getting Magic briefs is my favourite part of the job," says **Paul**, "because they're always descriptive but flavourful, with lots of scope to tackle them in your own way. The

brief for Rustwing Falcon was all about the light and colour, selling the idea of a beautiful bird soaring about the grasslands, flecks of rich gold in its feathers."

Planeswalker cards are a major focus for players because they're so powerful. Core Set 2019 sees the return of old favourites, including Ajani, leader of the cat warriors, and Liliana the necromancer. The latter was painted by another new magic artist, Livia Prima, who as well as creating the necromancer and a

gorgon for the black series, also painted Angel of the Dawn for the white section of the release.

"Angels, necromancers and gorgons complement each other in a fantasy world. It's such a pleasure to paint different moods and characters one after the other," says **Livia**.

> ❝ Angels, necromancers and gorgons complement each other in a fantasy world ❞

One new planeswalker was introduced to the set in the form of Vivien Reid, who is aligned with the game's green manna and who can summon creatures and direct them to attack using a magic bow. The card was painted by Austrian artist Anna Steinbauer.

DARK AND VIOLENT

Visually, the Core Set has a darker and more ominous feel to it than the previous release, Dominaria, which had a light and dreamlike tone. Core Set 2019 takes players back to the planes

British artist Paul Scott Canavan delivered a striking falcon for the white series.

Livia Prima's art for Liliana, the Necromancer brings a strong Gothic feel with it.

How did the Dominaria gig come about?

A couple of years ago I took a step back to focus on levelling up my skills. Magic art director Mark Winters was kind enough to offer constructive critiques of the work I was creating during this time, to try and help get me over the finish line. At some point the work I was showing him must have hit the target because I said he would put me on the roster for the next set!

What was the brief like?

One of the things I most enjoy about Magic is the awesome style guide for each set. Mark told me to use some of the guidelines to create a stained glass knight image that fit in the world of Dominaria, and we wanted the frame of the card to essentially act as the window frame.

How did you approach it?

I did a lot of research into stained glass, how it's created and what the drawing styles for the characters is typically like in stained glass windows found various cathedrals. I also tried to pay close attention to how the windows look when illuminated from the outside by the sun.

Why do you think that it hit the mark?

I think the reason this card resonates with fans so well is because I put a lot of my nostalgia for the game into this image. I first started playing Magic back in 1993 or 94, so going back to Dominaria for my first Magic assignment was pure joy! I really tried to capture that storybook fantasy vibe that I remember from back in the day, and I think that must have come through in the final art.

As well as Wizards of the Coast, Tyler has worked for companies such as Marvel, Blizzard and DC Comics.

www.tylerwalpole.com

first introduced in the 1990s. In play, creatures' powers can be built up quickly and although many intricate control strategies can be developed, it perhaps facilitates a more aggressive gameplay style. For the artists, however, each brief contains four main goals.

"Firstly, it needs to say something about what the card does. Does the creature fly? Does the spell draw other cards? Our creative team is responsible for distilling down the card rules and mechanics to visuals that we then give to the artists to bring to life," says Cynthia.

Cards also need to connect with the overarching themes of the set. As Cynthia explains, "That's what helps ⇉

Tyler Walpole's Knight Token artwork made it an in-demand card in the Dominaria set.

66 Our creative team distills the card rules and mechanics to visuals that we then give to the artists to bring to life 99

Arcs of magical power highlight Slawomir Maniak's artwork for Ajani's Last Stand.

The spell appears to fracture the frame in Svetlin Velinov's innovative artwork for Fraying Omnipotence.

Inspired by nature documentaries, Steven Belledin chose to show what lies beneath the waves in his Frilled Sea Serpent artwork.

Frilled Sea Serpent

Creature — Serpent

Frilled Sea Serpent can't be blocked this turn.

"Reel it in. No, wait! Throw it back!"
—Gertrude, deep-sea angler

4/6

New artist Paul Scott Canavan delighted in creating a filthy, rotting zombie with no lower jaw for this Token card artwork.

Tommy Arnold's Herald of Faith has a strong dynamic to it, with the angel appearing to speed skate in the air.

➤➤ a goblin or a burn spell, for example, look different from set to set.

"Thirdly, it needs to be illustrated with care and good craftsmanship. Much of that is on the artist and their abilities, but we will sometimes push."

"Finally, it needs to look different from other cards on the table. Art is remarkably important for quickly identifying what cards are being played by opponents during a game."

FRESH BLOOD

Naturally, Core Set 2019 contains the work of some of Magic's legendary artists, including Chris Rahn, Magali Villeneuve and Svetlin Velinov. But with each new magic release the art directors at Wizards of the Coast bring in new blood. While some of the more experienced painters are able to develop a knack for painting iconic card artwork, sometimes it's work by new names that players gravitate to.

Vivien Reid – a new planeswalker for anyone who plays green – as painted by Anna Steinbauer.

Adam Paquette painted a forest to complement planeswalker Vivien Reid. It's the only land card in the new deck.

❝ Art is important for quickly identifying what cards are being played by opponents during a game ❞

When Dominaria came out earlier in the year, it saw the debut of Tyler Walpole. One of his commissions was a Knight Token, a sort of fodder card that's usually summoned by a more powerful creature or spell. However, with a unique stained glass style to it, his knight became a card of choice for just about everyone playing a white deck. For artists, making a card desirable among players is a trick of the trade.

"The biggest piece of advice I give new artists is 'be yourself'," says Cynthia. "Sometimes there's an unspoken pressure on artists to try

and make their work look different, or like a generic average of everyone else in the game – and that goes for all clients, not just Magic. But the truth is that if we want to work with you, we think you have something special to bring to the game, beyond just an ability to paint."

In October, many of the artists we've mentioned will return with fresh art as M:TG heads to Ravnica. Nicol Bolas will be continuing his brand of tyranny in Guilds of Ravnica, followed by Ravnica Allegiance in January next year. Stay up to date by visiting **https://magic.wizards.com**. ●

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Antoine Collignon, concept designer

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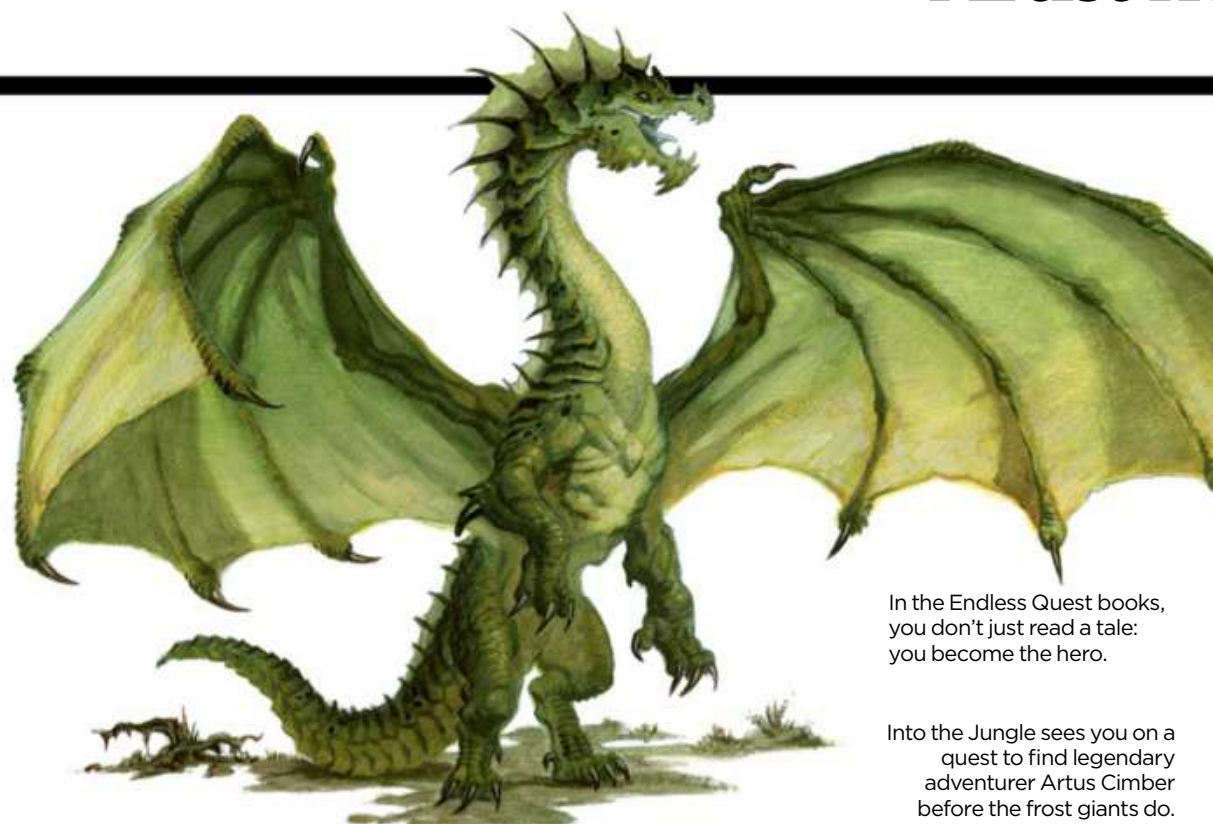
In the Endless Quest books, you don't just read a tale: you become the hero.

Into the Jungle sees you on a quest to find legendary adventurer Artus Cimber before the frost giants do.

In To Catch a Thief, you must find the baby griffon stolen by Xanathar, leader of the Thieves' Guild.

Quest foot forward

Roleplayer's return D&D revives its Endless Quest 'choose your own adventure' books, and brings some kick-ass art to the party

In the 1980s, the Endless Quest series of 'choose your own adventure' books offered youngsters a much-loved stepping stone into the Dungeons & Dragons universe – plus they were a handy fallback if you couldn't get a game group together.

Now they're back, with September seeing the release of four new books,

Big Trouble's storyline has you hunting for your missing little brother, helped by a wizard who lives in a flying tower.

each with 24 potential endings, written by veteran board game and RPG designer Matt Forbeck, and published by Studio Press.

The interactive adventures put you in the shoes of four of the most popular character classes in D&D (the fighter, the rogue, the wizard and the cleric) and are aimed at ages eight to 12. However, older gaming fans may also be tempted by both the lure of nostalgia and the inclusion of high-class artwork, created by some well-known artists.

And that's no coincidence. As D&D's lead designer **Jeremy Crawford** told Adobe Create last year: "Art for our books is vital. Art is the readers' first window into the world we're inviting them to explore. We're able to convey that invitation to a world of fantasy in a split second."
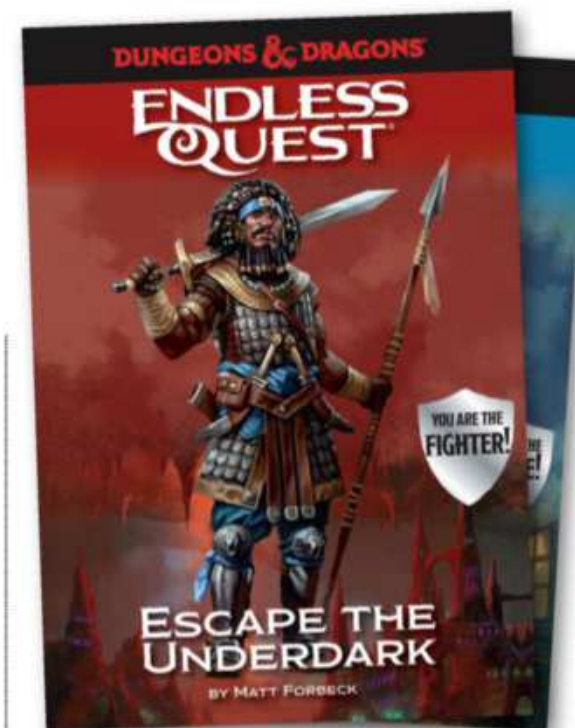
The new ranges of book revives the Endless Quest series, which was first released in the 1980s.

Artists contributing to the new hardback books include Aleksi Briclot, Craig J Spearing, Cynthia Sheppard, Kieran Yanner and Scott M Fischer. And with interest in real-world gaming on the rise, as our Games Workshop studio profile on page 38 attests, we expect these first four titles to be just the start of things to come. Find out more about the books by visiting **https://ifxm.ag/endlessquest**.

All artwork © Wizards of the Coast LLC

Photograph © Niccolò Caranti

Almu Redondo

Flexible jungle Whenever she's travelling with her portable art studio, this Spanish storyboarder and concept artist likes to surround herself with plants. Lots of plants…

My work desk is a reflection of the world today: a fast-paced environment in which creative minds travel around the globe from project to project and company to company. It's a small satellite station that sails with me through my nomadic career, which has brought me from Pamplona to Kilkenny, via Beijing and London.

When I'm not required to be based in-house, I work for companies all around the world from this studio setup in the middle of the rolling hills surrounding the medieval city of Kilkenny, Ireland. It's situated in a neighbourhood full of Cartoon Saloon artists, and is part of a crazy international community of exceptional artists that have come together to create animated stories.

Above: When she's not busy working in her portable studio, Almu can enjoy the sights and sounds of the city of Kilkenny.

It's our 21st century version of the historic Parisian district of Montmartre, slap bang in the middle of Ireland!

I always try to be creative in this den, where time stops and it's like I'm back at my grandma's house spending afternoons drawing with my sisters. It's the space where I can explore, push, break and then stitch worlds together, amid plants and my childhood's favourite smell: oil paintings! ➤➤

These tiny lights around all the plants create an awesome bubble of creativity at the end of the day, when I need to either work late or dive into my personal projects.

A sketch of my compact den. Can you identify all the elements in the photos stuck to the wall?

The views from my window help me to study the effects of light during different times of the day. This becomes helpful for producing colour keys, like this one for a short film.

For watercolour work I prefer tube-based paint over tablet form for its vibrancy and opacity. Canson paper gives my art added texture. When painting in oils I like to use water-mixable oil colour for a rough base, then finish the painting with fine oil paint. When storyboarding I'll sketch with Winsor & Newton ProMarkers and fountain pens.

My forest and tropical plants are the only objects that change in my studio, because I have to buy new ones everywhere I go.

My Dell XPS 13 laptop is teamed with a Wacom Cintiq 13HD. Together they have enough processing power to handle storyboard, animation and 3D software, and the biggest Photoshop files. They're lightweight, too – perfect art companions!

Audio is crucial for me to get into the emotional state necessary to develop my characters. I usually listen to classical music, alpha noise, podcasts or soundtracks.
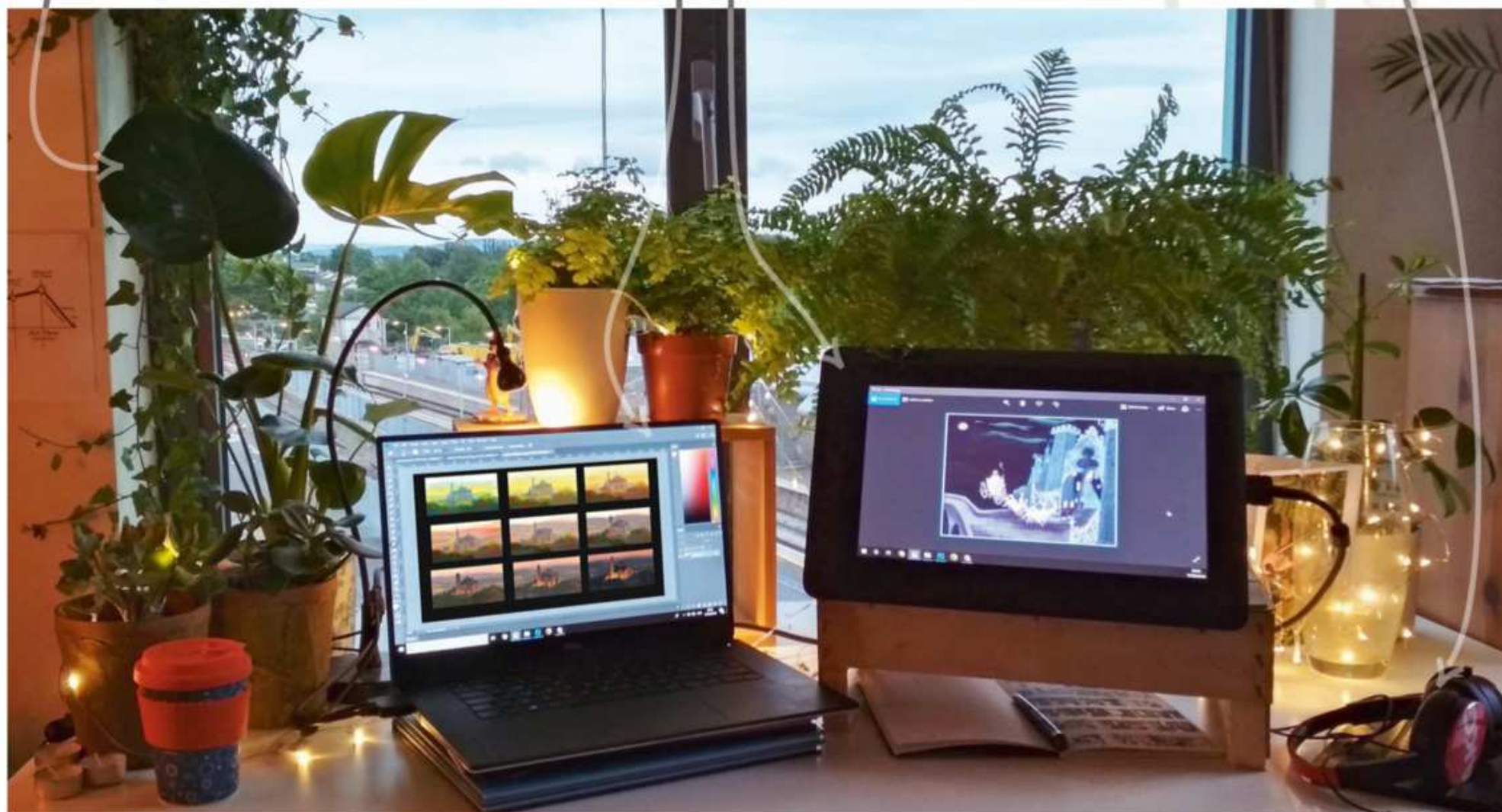
I use my iPad to display references, play music and for checking emails. Often this is the only device connected to the internet, to minimise distractions.

I usually need to have multiples desks ready for a project, so this side table with a watercolour setup already in place is a real time-saver.

This reference board helps me to create the visual map for different projects. Sometimes I even use both sides of the board for concurrent projects.

This Walimex aluminium workshop easel holds canvases up to 122cm in height. I can customise the stand with different modules, depending on how much paint I need or the size of the canvases that I'm using.

➤➤ The portable and versatile nature of the setup gives me the ability to work anywhere where the job takes me. It includes a laptop with a Cintiq, an extremely lightweight aluminium easel, and a useful board that can serve as reference area or as a secondary table! MultiFunction is key, because sometimes I'll be designing an storyboard or creating digital concept art in the morning, and working on an oil painting in the afternoon.

To balance this ever-changing environment and workload, I've established a daily routine that enables me to manage all my tools and to remain focused while staying connected to the remote teams I'm

part of. This ensures that I'm ready to tackle any incoming project.

My day starts with a workout at the gym to clear my mind and to prepare myself for the day ahead. I start working at 8am to take advantage of the best hours of the morning. Around midday I talk to the team, receive feedback, go to meetings and then have lunch. After a day's work I try to spend some time with my friends to reset my brain and have a good laugh!

Almu is a storyboarder, concept artist and illustrator who's worked for companies such as Disney, Universal and LucasArts, on upcoming films including Aladdin and The Voyage of Doctor Dolittle. She's currently at the Oscar-nominated studio Cartoon Saloon, developing the animated film Wolfwalkers.

❝ This setup gives me the ability to work anywhere where the job takes me ❞

This table is ideal for 2D animation and traditional illustrations or comic work, because it enables me to layer my drawings in whatever medium I'm using – pencils, inks, watercolour, gouache – and create my art in the same way as I'd normally do in Photoshop! All that's missing is the Undo option!

A piece of digital concept art for animation I did when redesigning the Harry Potter characters. You can see the influence of the lights in my studio in this piece!

A huge oil painting commission (200x150cm) that took up all the space of my studio for two weeks. Now it's hanging in my client's villa in the north of Spain.

Often when animating or storyboarding a character, I like to do rough sculpts of them to have as a reference source. This helps me to keep the proportions in check.

For the styles that I'm developing in my animation pieces and in particular for Cartoon Saloon, I need to gather visual references such as medieval manuscripts, abstract art and illustration work from the 50s, Bauhaus designers, and a decent selection of Impressionist and children's illustrations.

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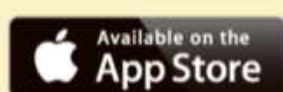
Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS

Contact the editor, Claire Howlett, on **claire@imaginefx.com** or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, England

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I loved the animation issue!

I've been reading ImagineFX for years and had been looking forward to the animation issue (#165, October 2018) because it always showcases great character concept ideas.

I loved the sketchbook section in this issue because it had some beautiful concept ideas. And I always like to see the Artist in Residence section just to see what artists' work stations actually look like. The magazine is a useful means to showcase certain illustrators, several of which I now follow and comment on. I always like to read the book reviews and have bought certain books based on your observations.

This month's front cover is fun-filled and dynamic, and probably inspired by Big Hero 6. My favourite issues are always the comic art, animation art and those that show concept character design processes. Keep up the high standard as your artists always do.
Richard Lowke, via email

Claire replies *It's always good to hear which parts of the magazine that a reader engages with and enjoys, so thank you for your thoughts and your time, Richard.*

Don't limit your options

As a reader of ImagineFX since the very first issue hit the newsstands, I find the letter in the September 2018 issue titled 'No traditional art' has incensed me sufficiently to finally write in.

I find it a sadly limited position for any artist to take, requesting you

Reader Richard, along with the whole ImagineFX team, loves checking out the studios of our featured artists.
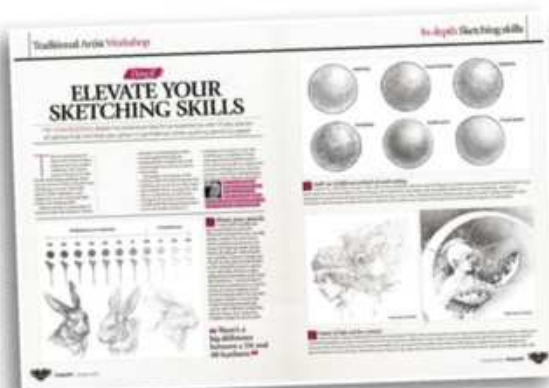
A compelling argument is made by reader Des on why traditional media art still needs to appear in ImagineFX.

remove traditional media from the magazine. Leaving aside that the tactile and often unpredictable natures of traditional media bring with them joys in use that digital tools only attempt to replicate, when you look at the leading artists of the field you find they're all still well involved in production via traditional media.

Why is this? If for no other reason that, at the end of the process, you have a physical piece of artwork, which continues to exist away from the moment of printing of the commissioned job. There's a beauty to a physical oil painting and glazed layers with their shimmering opalescence, which simply can't be replicated in a digital painting.

Your favourite brush with dog ears will give you results no custom digital brush will. And at the end you have a physical artefact that can be hung and displayed, sold or printed. A thing of beauty and depth and presence, not a flat image on a display.

I would encourage ImagineFX to keep producing articles on traditional media, because it's traditional media that always shows the way forward for the emulated environments of digital media tools. Indeed, I would love to see coverage of an even wider range – fantasy/sci-fi sculptors and jewellery makers whose efforts are worthy of inclusion. This is a community of creative souls, and ImagineFX has a role in the cross-pollination of the many and diverse tools those creative souls use. The future is never served well by limiting your options.
Des Embrey, via email

Claire replies *A community of cross-pollinating creative souls. I couldn't have put it better myself, Des. I believe that we represent all creatives. I know from emails that I receive that not all of our readers even paint, they just enjoy the creativity of others. Are you (yes you!) one of those readers? Let me know why you buy ImagineFX…*

DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE?
Don't worry – you can still get hold of it. Visit **http://ifxm.ag/165-ifx** for details.

FRESH PAINT

New works that have grabbed our attention

moonmistix
@moonmistix

Monster Repository
@NoiSackdaDraws

Heather Hitchman-Lambert
@heatherhitchman

If you've created art that you want us to shout about simply tag us on Twitter or Instagram, or find us on Facebook!

"As I sculpt, I'm simultaneously deciding what I want and how it'll be manufactured," says senior designer Seb Perbet.

GAMES WORKSHOP

Tom May talks to the creatives behind the models for tabletop games like Warhammer: Age of Sigmar and Warhammer 40,000

Founded in London in 1975, Games Workshop has grown into a very big business. The firm best known for tabletop strategy games like Warhammer: Age of Sigmar and Warhammer 40,000 recorded a £1 billion market value this June, and expects its profits to double this year.

That's due, in part, to the hard work and commitment of its dozens of talented artists. But that doesn't mean it's a stressful studio with constant deadlines to meet. "The environment is really informal, really relaxed," says

Roboute Guilliman, the Ultramarines' Primarch. "We're world building while generating new ideas," says Sam.
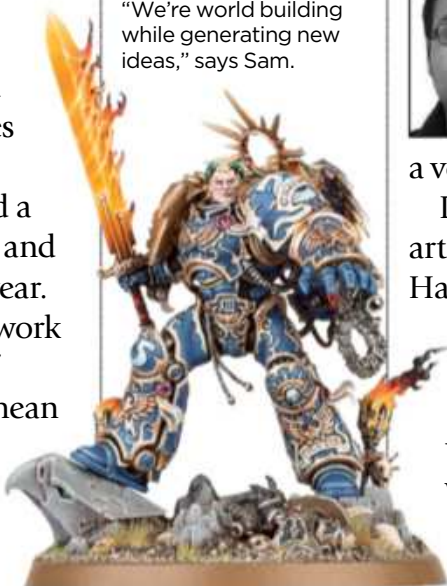
Dave Ferri, a concept artist who's been with the company, now based in Nottingham, for about two and a half years. "It's a very friendly atmosphere here."

Dave works with two other concept artists, John Blanche and Tom Harrison, to create the 2D illustrations that inspire the 3D digital sculptors – 29 of them in total – who lovingly craft and produce the figurines. And there's always work to do, says design manager Sam Dinwiddy, because the company is constantly developing

new lines and doesn't want to simply rest on its laurels.

"We're always looking to excite our customers with something new," **Sam** says. "We don't just want to run through the list of ranges and update ▶▶

Sketch for the Death Guard. "We try to provide the designers with a wealth of ideas," says artist Dave Ferri.

Concept sketch for the Endrinriggers: soldiers with back-mounted machines for flying, as well as tools for airborne repair.

▶▶ them all. That wouldn't excite anybody. So we need to create stuff that's unexpected, but still steeped in Games Workshop's heritage."

That creation process often starts with a simple sketch, says **John Blanche**, who first began freelancing for Games Workshop in 1977 and went on to spend three decades as its art director.

Concept artist Tom Harrison at work. He has "eternal dibs on anything relating to dragons", according to Dave.

66 We're led by enthusiasm and deep understanding of each others' backgrounds 99

"Sometimes the designers like the sketch so much, they'll actually make an image of it, but that's unusual. I'm opening the doors up for sculptors to go: 'Oh yeah, we could do that.' It gives them a route to go forward."

While John works with physical inks and paints, Dave creates most of his work in Photoshop on a Cintiq. "But the medium itself isn't important," says

Dave. "At the end of the day, the idea is what matters."

Typically, that design gets passed back and forth between concept artists and product designers in a process of re-invention and refinement. "It's very organic and collaborative," says John. "We're led by enthusiasm and deep understanding of each others' backgrounds; it's like one big family."

OPEN AND WILLING ATTITUDE

There are no 'silos' at Games Workshop, adds senior designer **Seb Perbet**. "One of the things that surprised me most was how open and willing people were to share their knowledge. I think it comes from the fact that we love this job and like talking about it."

For the digital sculptors, Seb explains, developing the miniatures is not just a technical

Concept sketch of Horticulous Slimux, a pragmatic and humourless being with a no-nonsense approach to battle and gardening alike.

Concept sketch for Stinkmullett, a Fungoid cave-shaman who's eaten so much poisonous fungus that spores have burst through his brain.

challenge but a creative one, too. "I think the best product designers don't separate these two aspects: the creative mind is the one suited to solving the hardest technical problems. So for me it's hard to distinguish between the two, because as I'm sculpting I'm deciding what it is I want and how it'll be manufactured at the same time." ▶▶

Sketch of Stinkmullett's head. "We're often really loose with sketching," says Sam Dinwiddy. "It's the energy and the feel that's important."

The finished model of Horticulous Slimux. "We're a vertically integrated business," says Sam. "We design, manufacture, distribute, package… absolutely everything, in fact."

JOHN BLANCHE

The artist on what it takes to work at Games Workshop…

What was Games Workshop like, back in the 1970s?
There wasn't a model soldier industry around in those days; it was very embryonic. So it was uncharted territory. Everything we did was new, fresh, vibrant and exciting.

What's been the secret to the company's success?
The imagery is so violent, so savage, so bloodthirsty. And yet gamers are such gentle people, so it must be cathartic! We live on a dark, savage planet – it's just a way of expressing that.

How do you create your art?
No digital whatsoever. I'm old-fashioned, all analogue. I can work very fast. I generally work with pen and ink. They don't all go right: some of them go wrong and I screw them up and throw them away, and just take the best ones in.

What kind of artists is the company looking for?
You have to have a knowledge and understanding and very deep enthusiasm for what we do. At the same time, if someone just comes along and draws pictures of what we've got already, that's no good either. Because it doesn't develop our imagery, it doesn't give it any forward momentum. So it's a mixture of both.

What advice would you give to applicants?
Ask yourself: do you love our games, do you love our miniatures? That's always the best start. The other one is: learn to draw people! Go to life-drawing classes, at least.

Previously an art director at Games Workshop, John continues to work for the company as a concept artist.

https://jobs.games-workshop.com

Concept sketch of Belisarius Cawl. "We pull from different historical things and mash them into something new," says Dave.

➤ Even the 2D concept art needs to be approached with the physical end goal in mind. As Dave points out, "These products are physically very small, and you can't get a lot of detail in there. So our concept art needs to be bold and graphic, and most importantly, based on strong shapes.

BALANCING THE DETAILS

"That's the hardest part: taking away the tendency to draw too much and strip it down," Dave continues. "You need to make the shapes interesting, because that's where the product will succeed. So it's important when you're drawing something to stand back a few feet and have a look. Can you still see the details? Does it still read as you wanted it to? If not, you've probably made it over-complicated."

And if you're a fan of Games Workshop yourself, then here's some good news: the company's hiring. "Finding good artists is difficult, because it's so niche," says Sam. "So we'll always look at portfolios and
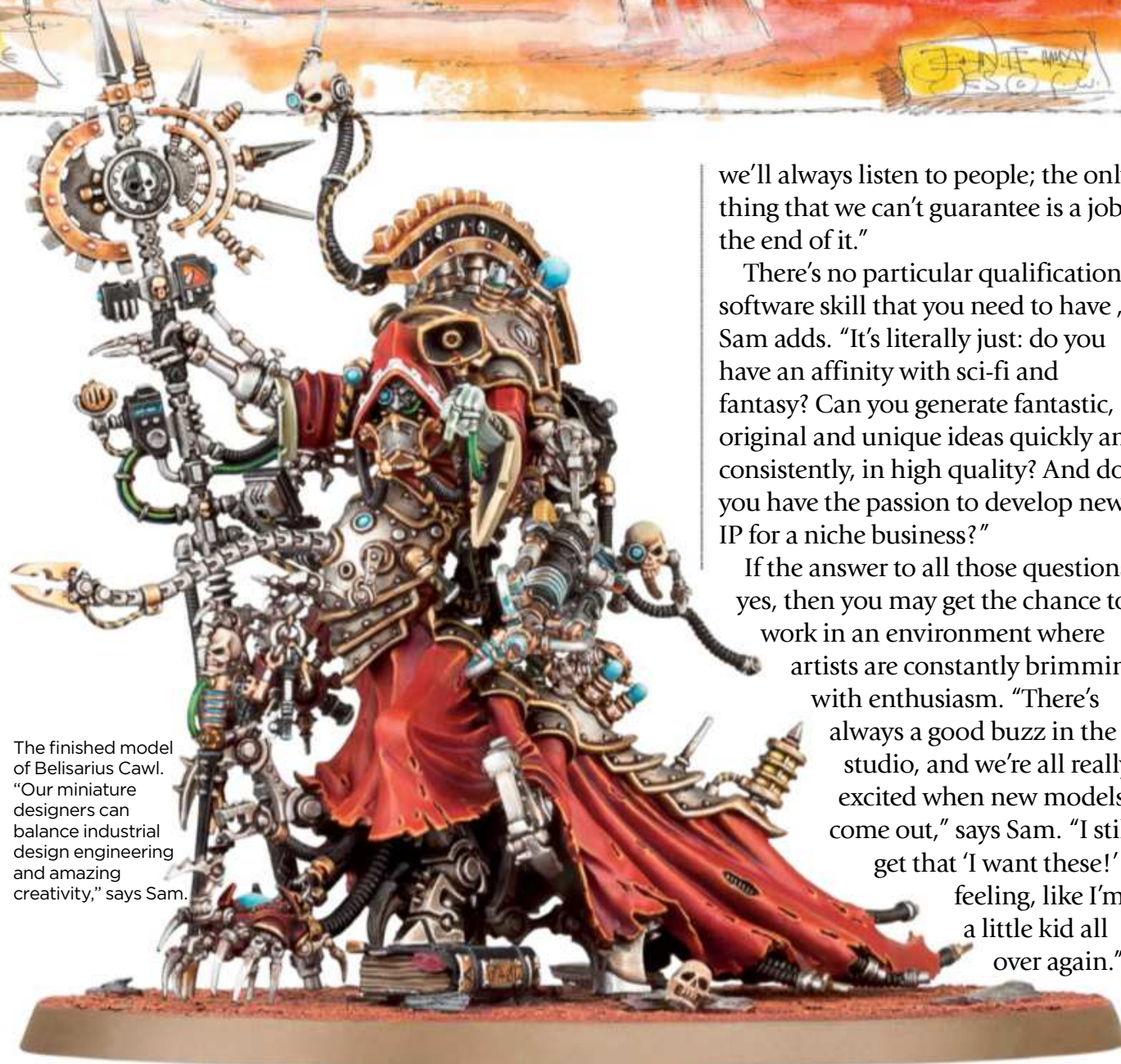
The finished model of Belisarius Cawl. "Our miniature designers can balance industrial design engineering and amazing creativity," says Sam.

we'll always listen to people; the only thing that we can't guarantee is a job at the end of it."

There's no particular qualification or software skill that you need to have, Sam adds. "It's literally just: do you have an affinity with sci-fi and fantasy? Can you generate fantastic, original and unique ideas quickly and consistently, in high quality? And do you have the passion to develop new IP for a niche business?"

If the answer to all those questions is yes, then you may get the chance to work in an environment where artists are constantly brimming with enthusiasm. "There's always a good buzz in the studio, and we're all really excited when new models come out," says Sam. "I still get that 'I want these!' feeling, like I'm a little kid all over again."

The Plagueburst Crawler is a siege tank with ram-blades, thick armour plating and daemonic energies.

Although the artists and designers chat day-to-day, they also have regular meetings to get feedback on each others' work.

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October 2018
In our packed animation issue, pro artists pass on their advice on how to break into the industry. There's tips on posing, rendering, storyboarding and character design, and we talk to Disney legend Armand Serrano.

Issue 164
September 2018
Simon Goinard's ethereal cover art lights the way to an issue that will help boost your concept art skills, with advice from Martin Nebelong, Anthony Macbain and Eddie Del Rio. Plus, we talk to Harry Potter film artist Rob Bliss.

Issue 163
August 2018
Become a manga superstar with the help of the pros, including Toni Infante and the artists from Collateral Damage Studios. We explore Paul Kwon's workspace, talk to Valentina Remenar and explore Copic marker techniques.

Issue 162
July 2018
Learn the skills to need to give your art extra impact, include 3D sculpting, working in VR, lighting and anatomy advice, creating a 3D scene ready for a paint-over, and more. Plus, 15 pro tips to boost your motivation levels.

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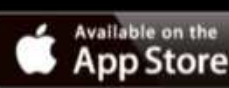
*Resource files are available from issue 85 onwards.

Dibujante Nocturno

Dragons compete for page space with spiky dark fantasy creatures and mysterious mermaids in this Spanish illustrator's sketchbook

Artist PROFILE

Dibujante Nocturno
LOCATION: Spain

Dibujante (real name Francisco Garcés) is an illustrator and concept artist who loves to combine fantasy with dark art. He especially loves drawing dragons and all sorts of fierce-looking creatures. Dibujante's work features on numerous books and album covers, and the artist has also released his own concept art book.
https://ifxm.ag/dibujante-n

ORGANIC

"I've been drawing for so many years, dedicating so many hours each day to this activity, that I feel it's a natural part of my day. When I draw and my line flows, the sketch twists and turns like an organic form."

MERMAID

"The effect of movement in a sketch fascinates me. It's something I'm in love with. Movement improves a drawing significantly. I believe that to become better at drawing we should have fun – I certainly enjoy depicting mermaids. We must find the time to draw what we really like and enjoy."

STEEL LINES

"My sketchbooks are full of dark warriors covered in metal. It's like my ball-point pen is able to paint with steel ink! There's something exciting about drawing fantasy and darkness. Beauty and elegance exist in this fusion if you're able to maintain the balance."

MAGIC MOUNTAIN

"Dragons don't exist in real life – I know that, I'm not crazy! But they've been a part of my life since childhood. I don't know why, but there's something about these magnificent creatures that obsesses me – I even dream about them. They're predators: very territorial and dangerous. I imagine that their habitat is far away on mountains tops, and the rest of the world sees their homes as magical places that they cannot understand."

“ I love seeing
the texture of aged
wood and the plants
that grow on it ”

FOREST DEATH

“When I walk through the forest, I like to look at dead and fallen trees. They're a source of inspiration: I love seeing the shape and texture of aged wood, and the plants that grow on it. It's like a piece of art that forms over many years. The fallen trees and their organic forms is like a being of bones that disintegrates little by little.”

DRAGONS

"Dragons, dragons and more dragons. That's what all my sketchbooks are like forever! What child doesn't dream of having one as a pet? Yet I don't want one of my own. Despite drawing dark creatures, I don't like horror movies at all. My inspiration is epic and dark fantasy that has its roots in my mind!"

SEA RIDERS & OCEAN INVOCATION

"Drawing fantasy is something that makes me very happy. I paint dragons, skulls and demons, but I'm not a dark person. The underwater world is magical, too – it's an unknown and mysterious place, and a rich source that feeds my imagination. I'm looking forward to creating more stories in my sketchbook, full of marine beings, magic and colour."

Sketchbook

SKULL DRAGON

"These are the two things that I like to draw the most, so I had to merge them. I think this is an exercise all artists should do: combine elements that at first glance don't work well together. For example, mixing animals: I once drew a creature that was half tiger and half monkey! We have to experiment and try many things, if we're to improve our skills."

SKULL AND ROSES

"I started this piece while waiting at the bank. I often draw to relax, especially in stressful situations. I've found that combining two distinct elements can result in a strong design. This is one of my favourites – I enjoyed drawing it."

DARK BRUSH STROKE

"Digital painting is wonderful for sketching and experimenting. This painting is part of a series of exercises I did to loosen up with the brush, trying to achieve fresh and expressive results. The dark brush strokes are beautiful. We must allow ourselves to improvise and let ourselves go; sometimes it's the drawing that tells us what the next brush stroke needs to be."

DARK WATER MERMAIDS

"I'm very happy with the drawings that I'm creating at the moment: underwater worlds that I'm filling with colour. Mermaids are usually portrayed as beautiful and good creatures. But I prefer to illustrate mermaids that have a darker, mysterious nature. I see them as fantastical, wild creatures."

> **We must allow ourselves to improvise and let ourselves go**

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX

Workshops

VIDEO WORKSHOP

Advice from the world's best artists

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This issue:

Photoshop
PAINT A STRONG FANTASY PORTRAIT

Tara Phillips guides you through her process of painting a captivating portrait. Fasten your cloaks and join her on this creative adventure!

Artist
PROFILE

Tara Phillips
LOCATION: Australia

Tara is a freelance illustrator based in Sydney. She specialises in creating realistic artworks that capture a palpable sense of mystery and atmosphere.
www.tara-phillips.com

Welcome to my second ImagineFX workshop! I'm thrilled to be able to show you through my creative process again. This time, involving two of my favourite things: the fantasy genre and portraiture! Both have been a focus of mine since my awkward teen years on Elfwood.com (RIP) and hold a special place in my heart.

When the ImagineFX team approached me with this commission, the brief was fairly open: paint a fantasy portrait. My mind, of course, ran wild with fantastical ideas. With some effort, I finally settled on painting an elven maiden as my subject. A woman of wealth and sophistication who, by some happenstance, is travelling the mountainside.

Over the next few pages I'll be guiding you through my process of creating a captivating fantasy portrait. Starting with my initial sketch, I'll show you a variety of techniques that you can use in your own art process. From concise line work through to adding depth and colour, I'll show you the various steps I take that enable me to create a compelling fantasy portrait.

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 8 now!

1 Brainstorming and sketching
My first step is to brainstorm some ideas. Most of the time this involves me taking photographs or looking through atmospheric images online. Once I've formulated more of a narrative in my head, it's time to start sketching! I open my canvas and draw up a striking lady, clad in fur.
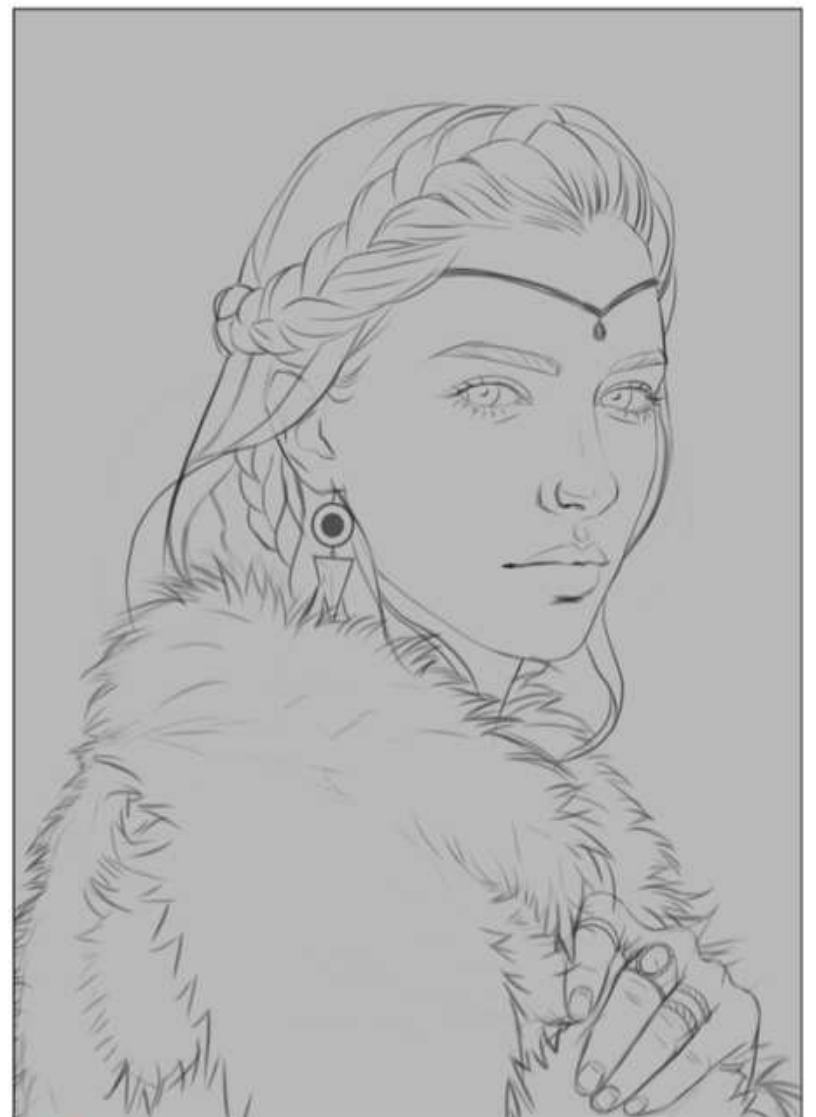
2 Line work and planning
After receiving some feedback and making a few adjustments to my sketch, I draw up my lines. I plan these out as thoroughly as I can so I don't have to make up too many details when rendering later on. Planning these structural components save me time in the long run. ➤➤

3 Establish layer masks

Here's where I prepare my painting for the rendering ahead. I reduce the opacity of my lines at the top of my canvas. Underneath, I block in different areas of the artwork with a Hard brush so I can tackle it in pieces. I organise each of these blocked areas into separate layers, so I can click and select an area when I need to.

4 Working on values

I always begin rendering with a Soft brush. I won't be adding colour just yet, because this stage is primarily about lighting and shadows. I start by working over large areas to establish my basic lighting, and as my values build up I converge over smaller areas with a finer brush.

5 Adding fur to the cloak

This is where my handy custom fur brush comes in and saves me extra time. I paint in segments of fur while keeping in mind the direction (or nap) of the hair. This will serve as a base texture for when I render and define the fur during the colouring stage.
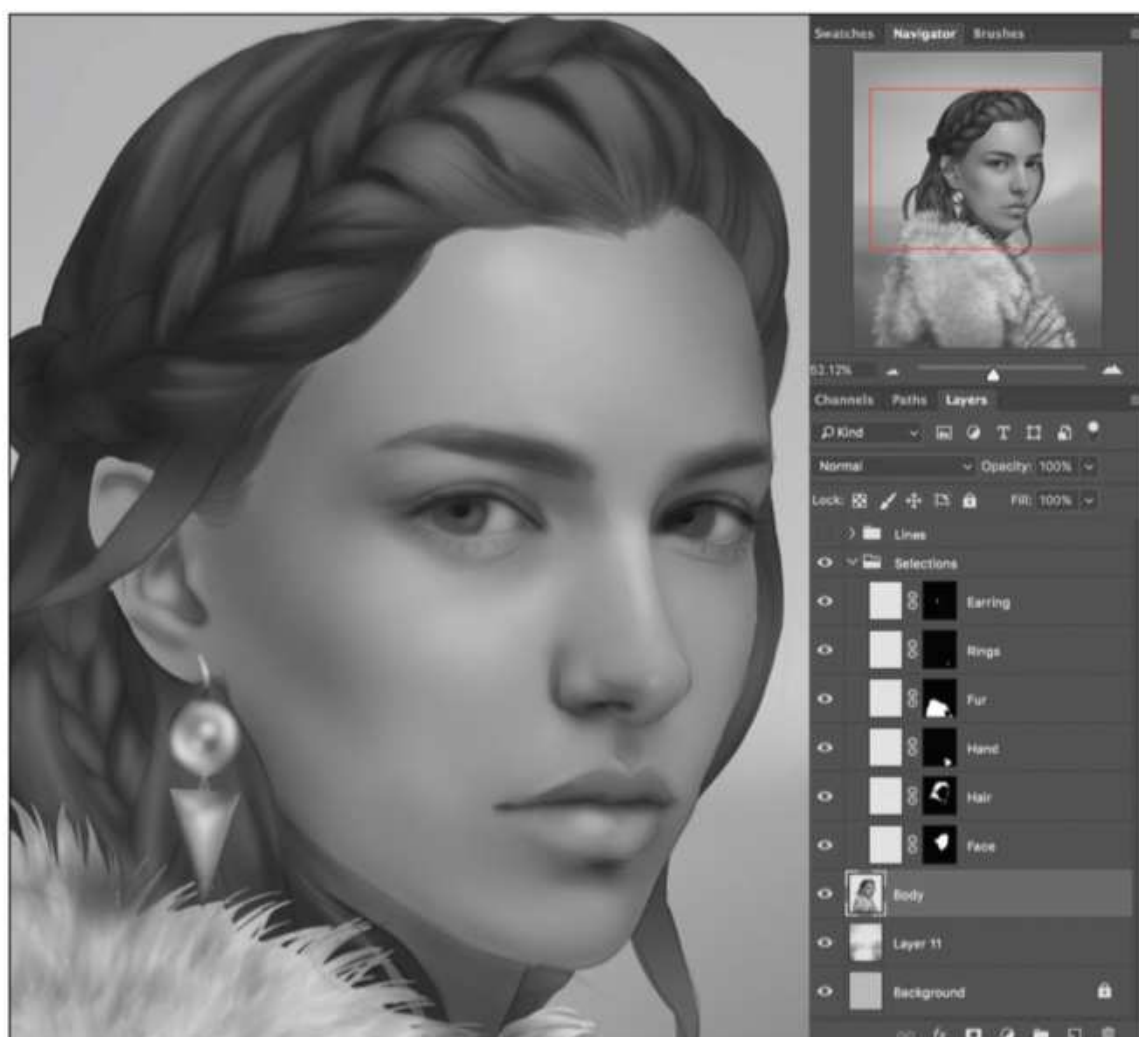
6 Organising my layers

Now that I've laid down my basic values for the piece, I'm almost ready to start adding colour. Before I do that, I get those layers in order by merging them down. I organise all of my block selections in a folder at the top of the Layers panel.

7 Adding colour to the character

I begin by creating a new layer and setting it to Color mode in the Layers panel. I lightly airbrush over my character, working over one segment at a time. Once this is done, I bump up the contrast and intensity of my colours by painting on a new layer that's set to Overlay.
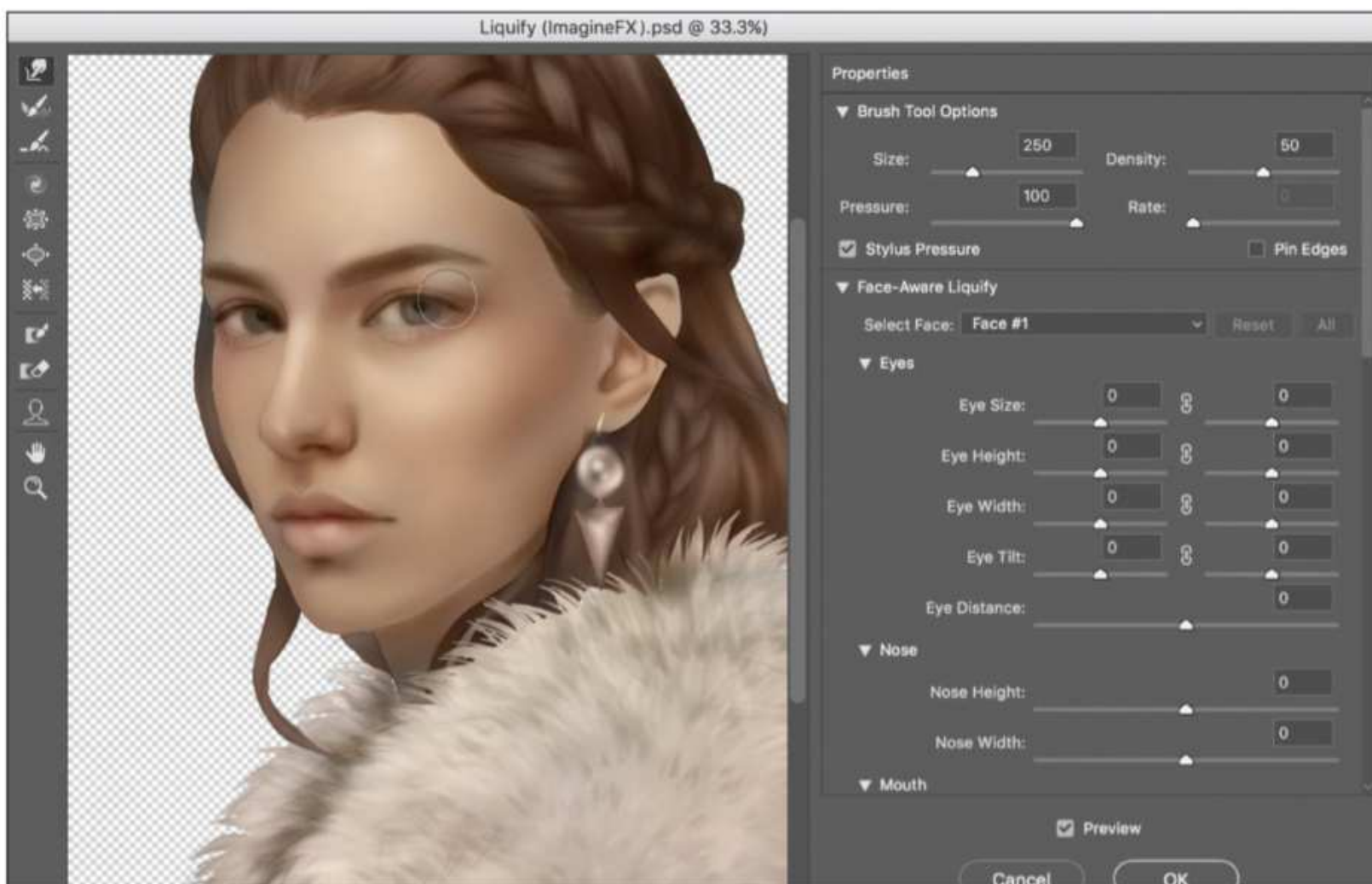
8 Re-shaping facial features

I want to enhance her elven attributes so I merge all of my characters layers together and open up the Liquify tool (in the Filter menu). Here I begin reshaping and emphasising parts of my character's distinctive features. I lift her brows and cheekbones, and increase the size of her eyes for that classic delicate elven appearance. ➡️

9 Defining and blending

I keep working over her face until I'm happy with her features, and then move on to the hair (this part is best achieved with a streaky brush). I lightly paint following the direction of each segment of hair, keeping in mind the point where the light reflects. I also use a Soft brush to mask out the harsh edges of my character against the background.
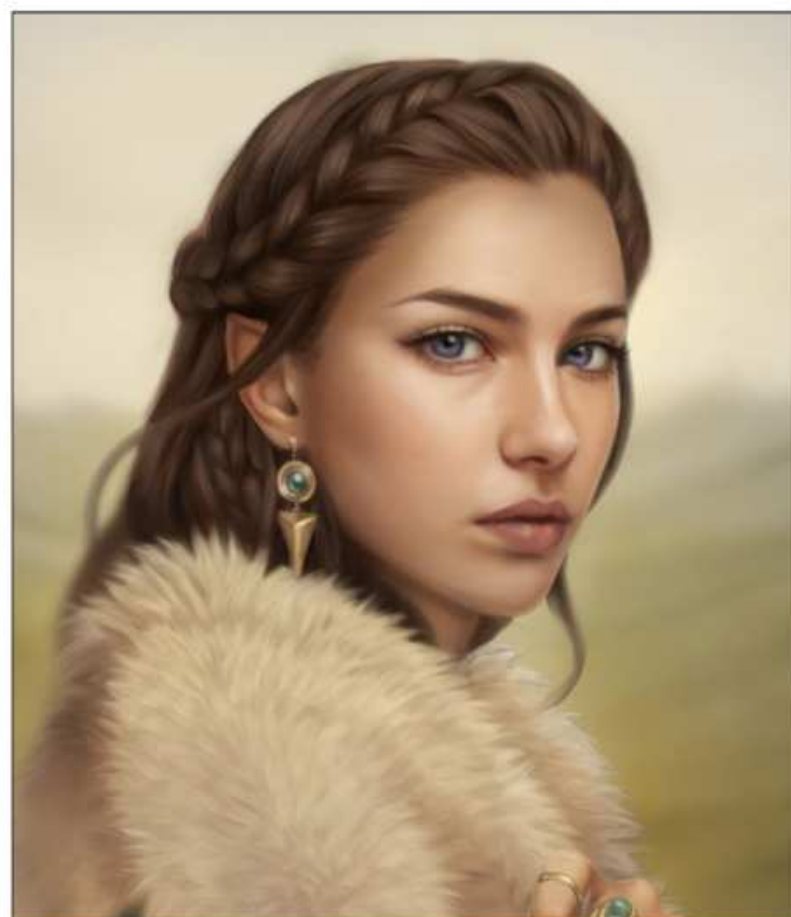
10 Building and texturing

From this point, I work with normal layers to gradually build up colour, occasionally turning my lines layer on as a guide. I use an assortment of textured brushes to add dimension to my work. Some of my favourites are from Kyle T Webster's Megapack (these come free with Photoshop CC). I slowly work over my painting and sculpt various features as I go.

11 Defining the background to develop atmosphere

I'm envisioning vibrant hills, distant mountains and a late afternoon sun in this outdoor scene. I roughly paint ridges into the landscape, introducing softly lit hills and clusters of distant trees. I keep my brushstrokes loose during this stage because I don't intend for my background to be in focus.

12 Changes and details

I want my character to stand out a bit more, so I decide to change her hair colour. Using the selective Color Adjustment layer, I settle on a nice auburn colour. To complement her new vibrant hair, I've decided freckles would be a perfect addition! These add a lovely texture and dimension to her skin.

13 Introducing some extra embellishments

I want to enhance my character's appearance with some more jewellery, so I paint a diadem to match her assorted trinkets. Because the sun is sitting behind my subject, I introduce some rim light to the edges of the fur around her. This also works to lift her from the background.

14 Applying the final touches to the portrait

I copy and paste my own grain texture over the artwork and set this to Overlay at seven per cent. Now I'm ready for my final colour adjustments. I boost the reds and yellows in the artwork using the selective Color Adjustment layer. I also use a photo filter to warm the artwork a touch. Finally, I blur my background (Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur) for an out-of-focus look. And I'm finished – I hope you enjoyed the journey!

Next month

Master artist Patrick J Jones shows you how to create flawless figurative art

Next month in...

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

ImagineFX

The art of figure drawing

Don't miss the start of our new eight-part workshop series with Patrick J Jones!

All this… and more!

Sixmorevodka studio profile
Step inside the swish art studio of this cool Berlin-based collective.

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Concept artist Gavin O'Donnell recreates a classic painting in digital.

Abstract male portraits
How to get the best out of ArtRage with fine artist Phil Galloway.

Sam Hogg's sketchbook!
Delve into Sam's eclectic collection of character and creatures scribbles.

Photoshop
CONCEPT A DEADLY WAR BEAST

In this two-part workshop **Rinehart Appiah** paints a concept for Total War: Warhammer

To progress in the field of concept art, study and practice are both essential. To be comparable to others working within the games industry, having a good eye for shape and proportions are two of the most important fundamental skillsets you can develop.

In this workshop, I'll take you through the process of how I concept a character for Total War: Warhammer using Photoshop and other techniques I've picked up through the years of working in the industry. I'll start with quick shape exploration in the form of thumbnails and silhouettes, then I'll move on to blocking in colour, establishing and rendering unique materials, and adding details with custom brushes. Finally, I'll apply lighting techniques and shadows to complete the concept.

VIDEO WORKSHOP

Workshops

Images: pxhere.com/pixabay.com

1 Finding the right reference

Before I begin a concept I spend a little time on research, gathering reference materials and establishing a colour palette. Whether it's books, films or the internet, any form of reference can be helpful. Because this character is a woolly mammoth I'll focus my research on skin texture and fur.
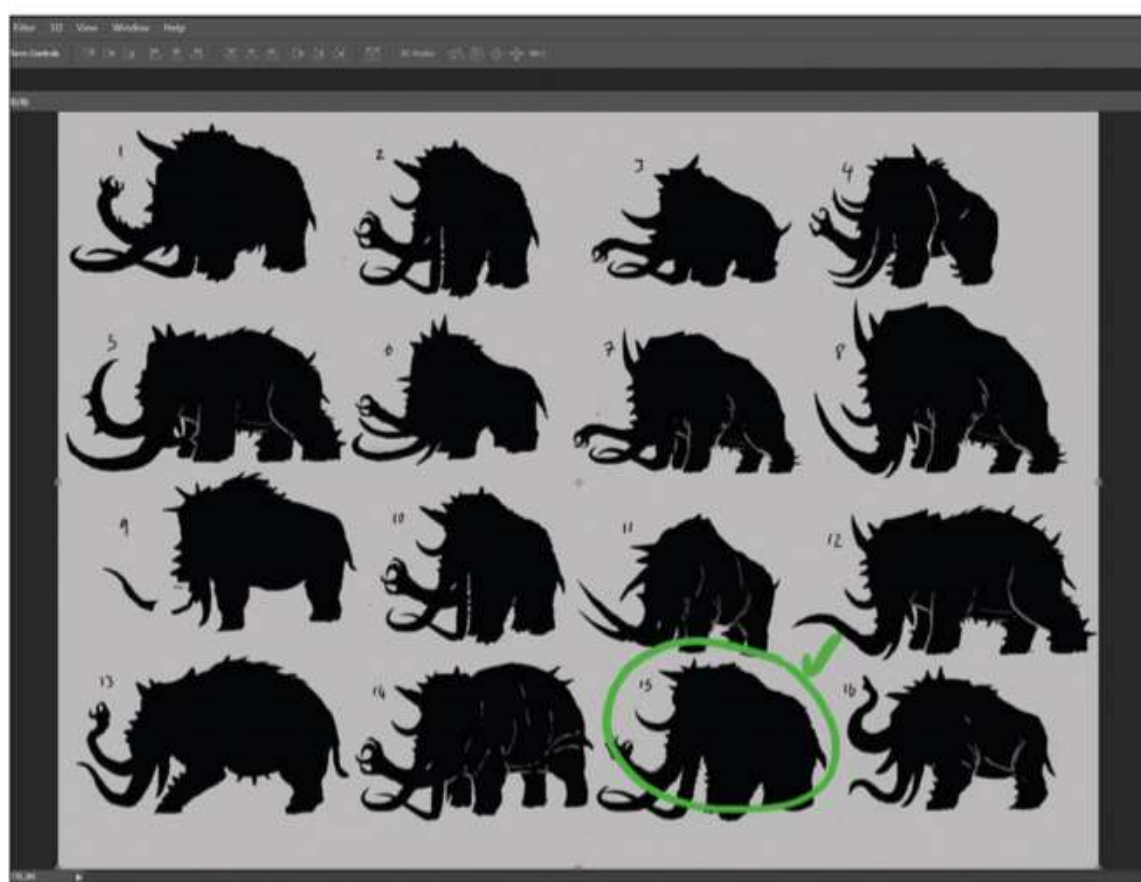
2 Generate quick silhouettes

Now the reference is gathered, I create quick silhouettes to establish form and shape early. Generally, I tend to quickly scribble down 20 or so, tweaking things as I go as well as blending different ones together. Taking this approach produces some unique and unexpected results that might contribute to the final design.
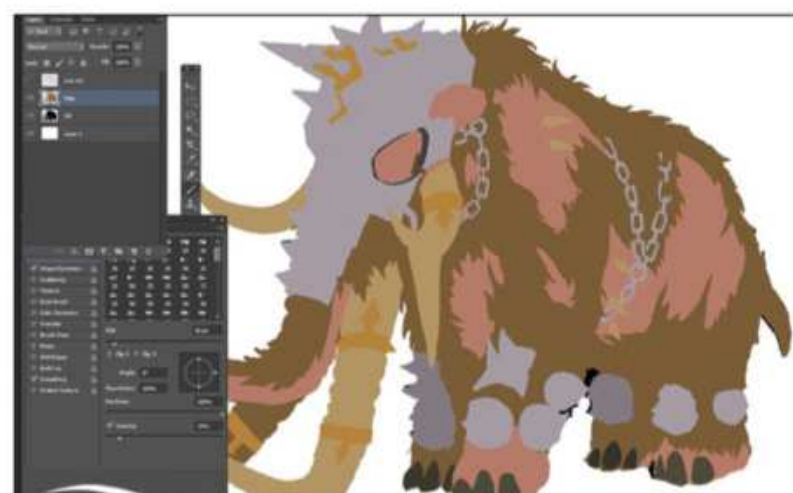
3 Blocking out the concept

I pick thumbnail 15 because it has the size and proportions I'm going for. I scale it up and lower the Opacity to 20 per cent. Then I create a new layer and block in the main materials using flat colours and the Lasso tool. I'm looking for contrast between materials, focal points on the character and deciding where the rest areas should be (areas without an overwhelming amount of detail).

4 Bring in some line art

Now I apply the line art, I can see from the reference that mammoths are covered in thick dense fur so I draw in the fur with the Hard brush set at four pixels. I focus the details on the front half of the mammoth, and slightly diminish the details closer to the back of the body. This helps to emphasise scale.

5 Shading and light

Now that the base colours are defined, I need to establish a light source. I select the top left-hand side of the screen for the main light source and the bottom right as the secondary. I focus much of the reflective light on metallic elements, with the least reflective being the fur.

RESOURCES

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: CHAIN BRUSH RINEHART

I use this brush to quickly paint chains in different sizes in just one stroke.

HARD ROUND BRUSH RINEHART

A great brush for painting fur because it fades at the end of each stroke.

6 Rendering the beast's fur

Just as with the colour blocking earlier, I also use the Lasso tool during this stage. I switch to a Soft brush and paint the ends of the fur with a darker brush and the top of the fur with a lighter shade. I repeat the process until the fur on the mammoth's body is complete. ➡➡

Workshops

7 Texturing the tusks

I want to create the look of a dry, hard surface for the carved tusks. Using a custom Hard round brush I shade with the darkest brown on the edges of the tusks, then slowly progress to a lighter colour as I reach the middle. The process is repeated on all of tusks, including the unsettling skull details.

8 Detailing scars on exposed skin

From the references of the miniature I can see that the skin of the mammoth is ravaged from years of battle duty. I want to go with a deep scar on the shoulder, so I start with a jagged line using the Hard brush. Because the skin of the mammoth is thick and dry I add a highlight around the scar using a Soft brush (with Opacity Pressure turned on). I then add smaller scars on the back leg.
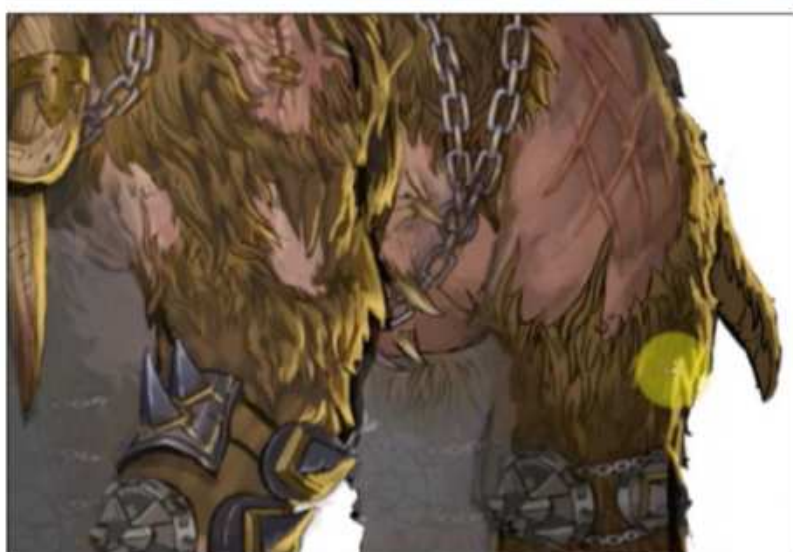
9 Secondary light

Time for the secondary light to be added. I choose a vibrant yellow to contrast the brown fur and paint along the back of the body and leg. Because the light source is shining from the bottom right, I only highlight the edges of the fur and tusks, being mindful not to overwhelm the image with too much light.

10 Texturing the metal elements

Because metal objects should reflect their surrounding environment, I add subtle hints of the fur and bone on to the shading of the material. Next, I begin to add the rust and scratches using a Hard brush and bring in a golden highlight around the lower eyelid and spikes on the head. This helps to place the focus on the head of the creature, which holds the most detail.
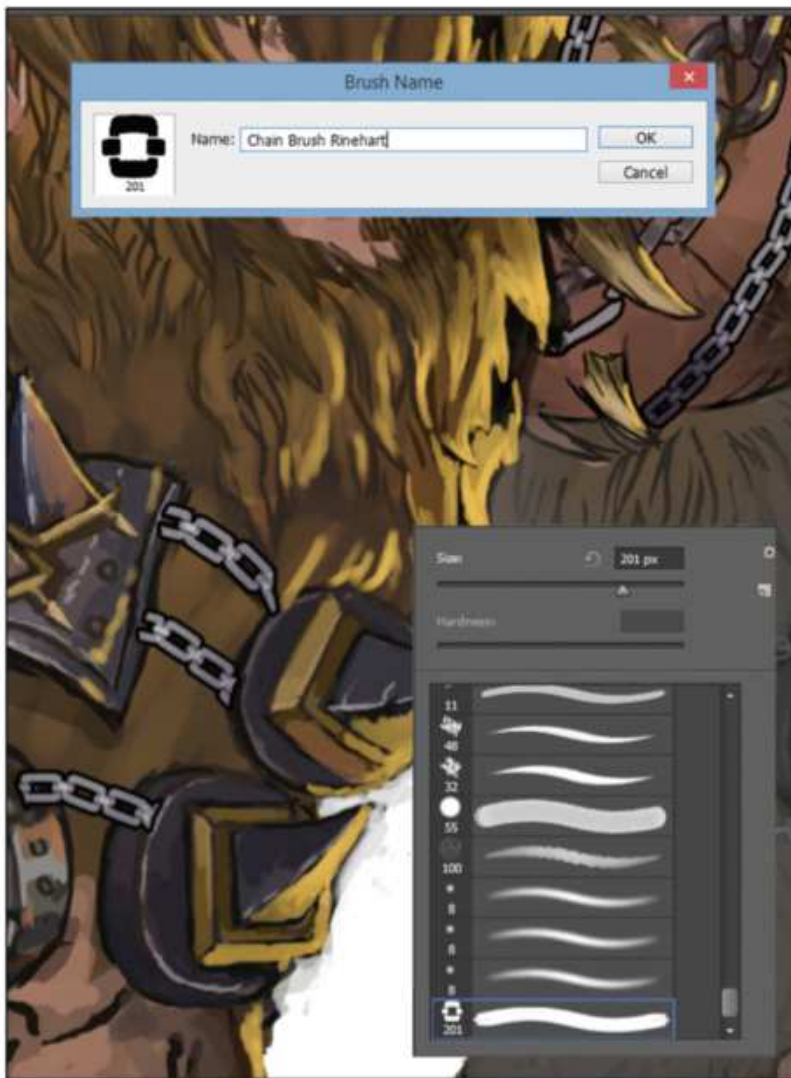
11 Adding the chains
Using my custom chain brush, I wrap the chains around the body and then paint smaller ones around the legs and bottom half of the design to hold the spiked armour in place. As you can see, this character is gigantic and so the use of smaller, man-sized chains further emphasises the size and scale of the creature.
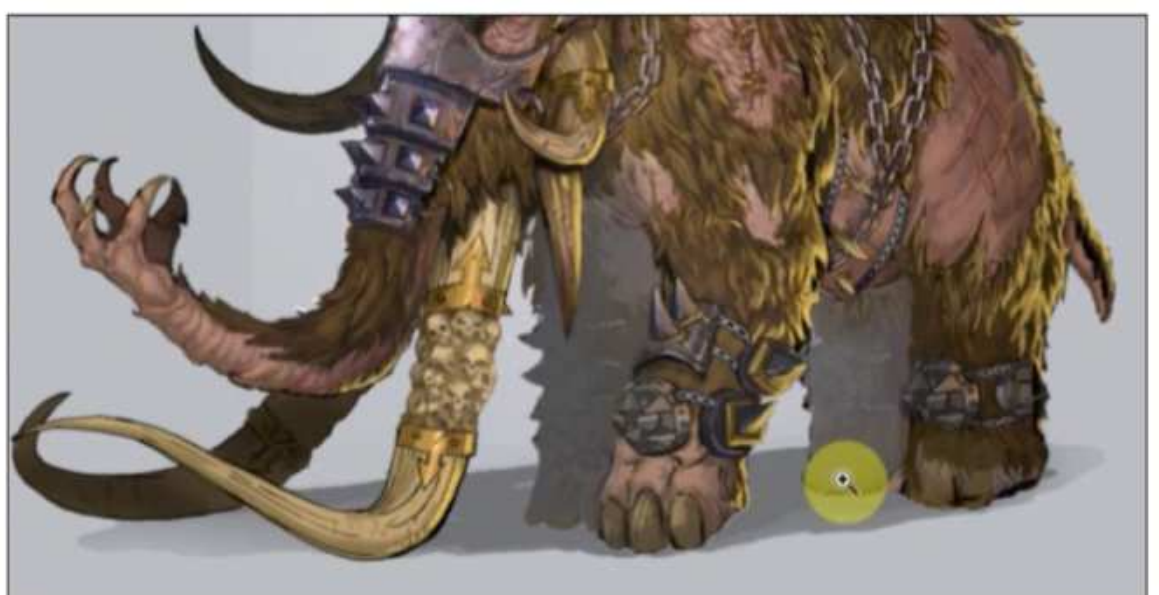
12 Shadows and fine details
I observe the direction of the light source (top left) and paint on the shadow using the Soft brush on a Multiply layer at 15 per cent Opacity. Then I add my final touches (rust, sports and warts) on the helmet and fleshy areas of the creature.

13 Paint a basic background
I don't want to take the attention off the character and want to pull the eye to focus on its head. I do this by creating a two-toned background colour to complement the design. I create a new layer and call it Background, then select the Lasso tool and highlight the area behind the mammoth. Using a Soft brush, I then paint a bright highlight (10 per cent Opacity) behind the head.

14 Final touch ups
Finally, I take a step back and look at the image. I'm not entirely happy with the size and colour of the bottom tusks so I slightly extend them outwards. Now I use the Color Balance slider and add a slightly cooler purple hue to tie the colours together. Then I use the Lasso tool on the horns and brighten them using the Brightness and Contrast sliders to make them pop.

Painter

HOW TO PAINT OILS DIGITALLY

Discover how to achieve the look of traditional oil paintings in the latest version of Corel Painter, with video game artist **Magdalena Proszowska**

Artist PROFILE

Magdalena Proszowska
LOCATION: Germany

Magdalena is a senior concept artist working for Ubisoft Blue Byte. She's passionate about digital painting, and is a guest teacher and often speaks in local events.
https://ifxm.ag/magdap

It only feels like yesterday when I was role-playing with high school friends in fantasy worlds full of knights, wizards, barbarians and treasures hidden in dungeons. Our gamesmaster dragged us through months of complicated plots and comical battles – mostly between our own party of mischiefs.

As teenagers, the most treasured possessions we owned were the RPG handbooks. Among them, the bestiary books were my first contact with the world of concept art and character design, and that's what made me interested in pursuing a career in art. Faeries, dragons and unicorns were present on the inside covers of all my school books.

Almost everything back then was still painted traditionally in acrylics or oils. My preference for clear brush strokes and canvas or paper texture visible in print has stayed with me over the years, and for a long time I looked for a way to create the same effects in my digital paintings.

What's so beautiful about traditional art is its unpredictability. There are so many happy accidents that give the traditional painting a soul. The way that every hair in your brush tip leaves an individual mark. How pigments don't just mix, but "sing" a magical song together. With Corel Painter 2019 I found a perfect tool to recreate all of this digitally.

① Forming a rough idea

There are two things I love focusing on in my art: colour harmony and strong characters. Often my paintings consist of a person looking at the viewer. I like creating a link between the real world and the world of my illustration, and the best way of achieving this is direct eye contact. My initial thumbnails are done in just few minutes. I often think in colours, seeing what colour composition creates interesting harmonies. ➤➤

2 Understanding your references is key

After checking with the ImagineFX team which of my ideas would best suit the issue, I start gathering reference pictures, while sketching and developing the idea. I'm using the free software PureRef (**www.pureref.com**) to organise my photographs: I can save my collection and return to it any time. I keep it visible on my secondary monitor.

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PAINTER 2019

CUSTOM BRUSHES: REAL 2B PENCIL

Tilting the pen changes the shape of brush, just like a real pencil.

SARGENT BRUSH

Can be used for blending and for painting hard edge at the same time.

REAL OILS FILBERT

Achieve soft blending with a delicate, natural brush finish.

GLAZING SOFT

Want to fix your colours or values? That's easily done with this brush!

3 Don't leave unanswered questions

Before I start any work on the final image I spend time exploring all possibilities. I sketch from photos or imagination, allowing myself to organise my thoughts and create a clear idea. Developing my elements during the sketch stage saves me lot of time, compared to doing the same when painting with colours and lights.

4 Creating a detailed sketch

By now I've figured out the big picture. I've decided on the composition, colours and details, and I'm feeling confident that this is the right picture I want to complete. Now I need to make sure that the figure's anatomy and perspective is correct and the key shapes balance nicely.

5 Burnt sienna underpainting

This step is taken straight from the traditional oil painting process. Painters use it to create monochromatic value composition, by setting up a basic environment of light and shadows. I open the Mixer window in Painter and create a gradation of Burnt Sienna to black and white. I make sure that the contrast is interesting and strongest in points of interest (mainly the face).

6 Colouring the monochrome underpainting

In traditional art the next step would be to create thin layers of paint to colourise the monochromatic picture. This process is called glazing. Corel Painter 2019 has a new family of Glazing brushes for this very step. I set the layer mode to Colorize and apply various colours. I let some of the underpainting show through and avoid having flat shapes of the same hue or colour. This creates a mesmerising mosaic of brushstrokes. ➥
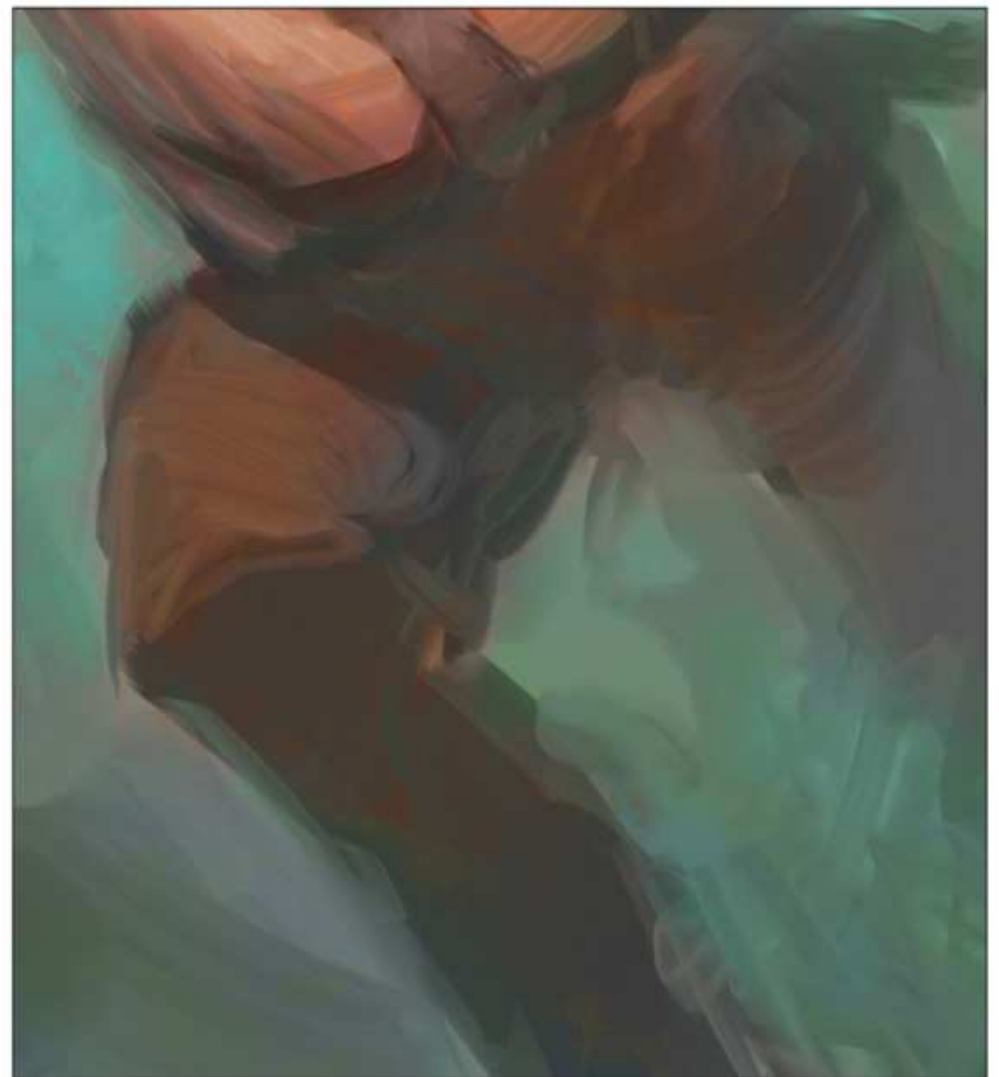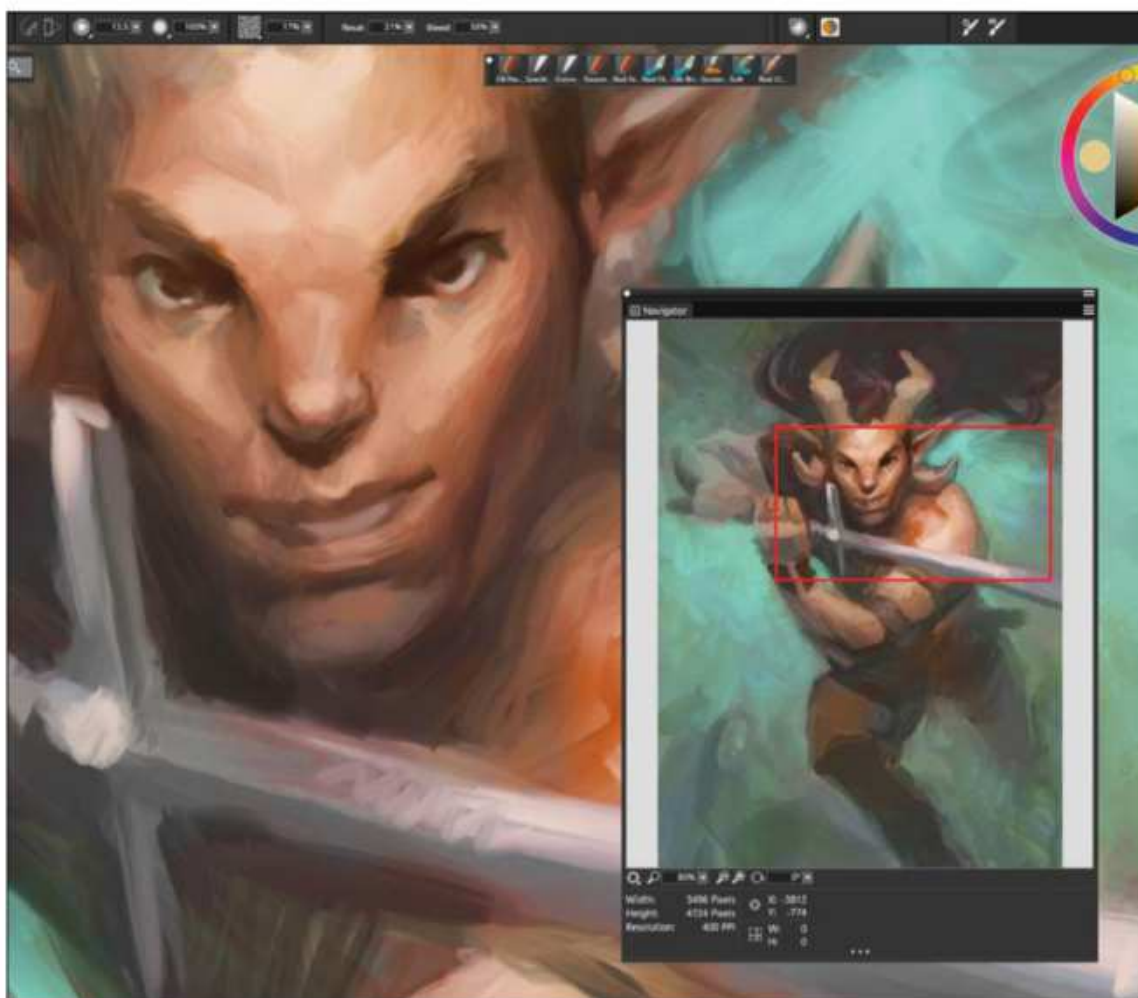
7 And now the rendering begins…

At this point 80 per cent of the image is completed. The remaining 20 per cent will take five times as much time, as I polish all the details. I never stop controlling the whole picture. Even when I'm zoomed on a portion of the painting, I still keep the Navigator window open (Window>Navigator or press Ctrl+7) on my second monitor, and constantly compare my progress across the whole image.

8 Focus in on the face

The face of my character is the most important aspect. That's my selling point: everyone will look into his eyes and look for connecting emotions. I need to make sure the face feels anatomically correct, even if it's stylised and has a strange shape. I spend lot of time pushing and pulling, carving it like a sculpture.
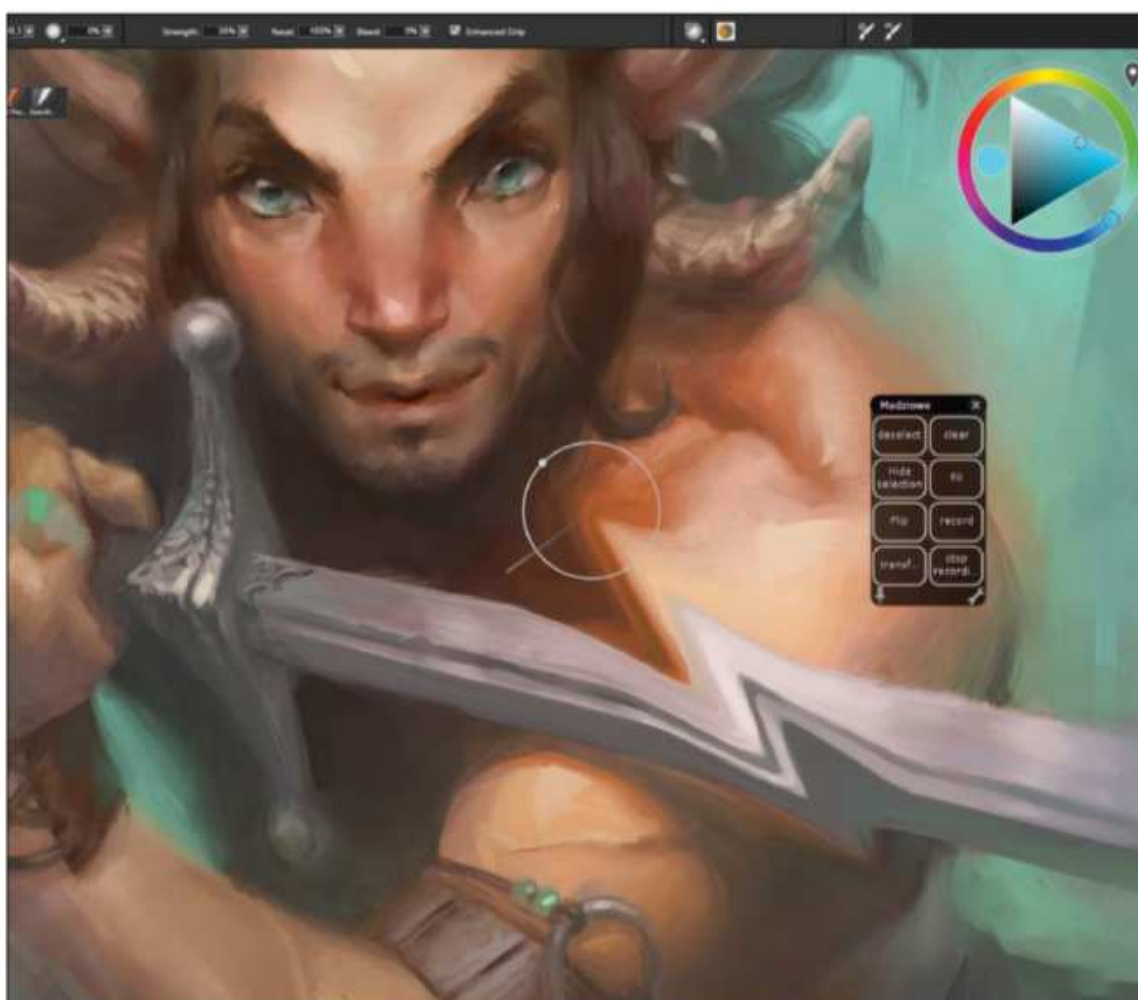
9 An alternative to Photoshop's Liquify tool

I use the Distorto brush on a low Strength setting (around seven per cent) to correct the position of any elements that feels 'off'. Moving the nose slightly to the right, aligning eyes to the same level or changing the shape of the face can be done with this single tool. You can find the Distorto brush within the F-X brush group.

10 Jump from place to place

I force myself to never work in one spot for too long. I want my picture to develop evenly. My aim is to leave some parts looking quite rough, but I make sure I have full control over the painting's development. How it graduates from focus points to less-important areas. I use a mix of Artists' Oils and Sargent brushes for realistic touches.
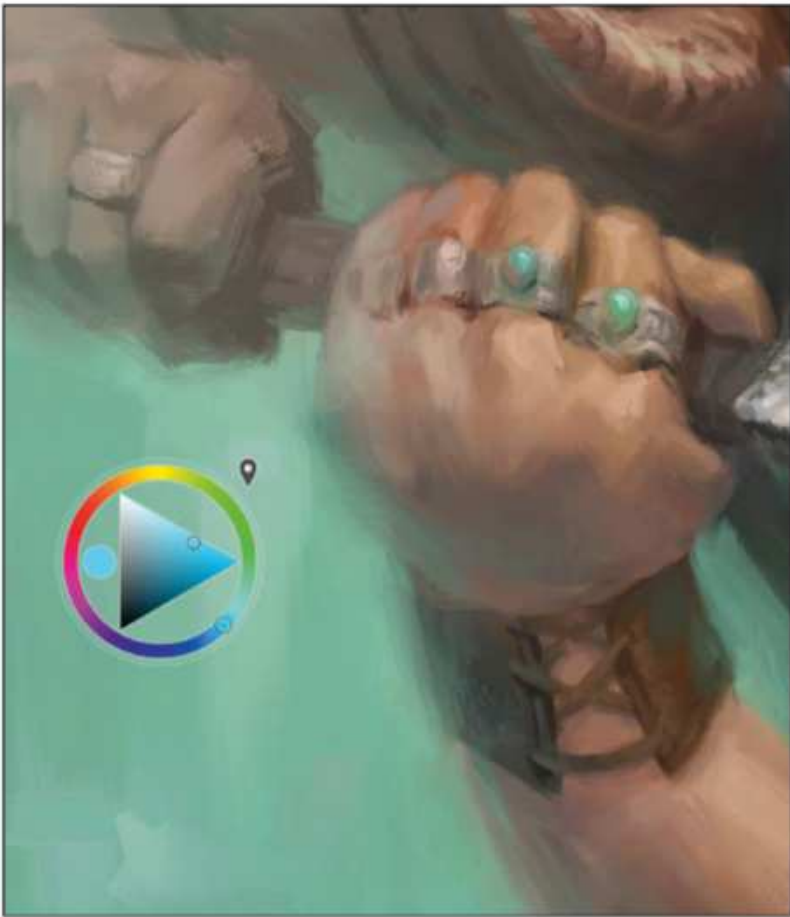
11 Pick a colour and alternatives

Painter 2019 now offers a floating colour wheel, which enables me to have full control over my colour choices while using the stylus. I paint directly with the colour I picked from the canvas, but only when blending. Otherwise I select a colour and suitable alternatives using the colour wheel. I change its temperature to warmer or cooler, make it brighter or darker, saturated and so on.

12 Correcting my values

For a readability check I turn the picture black and white. I notice how flat my value composition becomes when a green background and a warm skin share a similar brightness. Knowing how difficult is to print vibrant greens and cyan, I decide to darken the background. This also makes the character pop!

13 It's not cheating!

The magic of digital art is all the shortcuts you can access. I stopped feeling guilty about using them long ago, knowing how much "cheating" was applied in traditional painting. Maybe the Old Masters didn't call it a Multiply layer, but glazing darker colours to dim down large areas of a painting is nothing new. That's what's I do here: use Multiply mode to darken the background.

14 Making my final corrections

I correct the contrast and colours to create the most appealing version of the picture. I have a tendency to paint at a very low contrast, so to create more visual interest I play around with different settings. I use Equalize and Correct Colors from the Tonal Control option under the Effect tab. And that's me finished!

Photoshop
CREATE ART FOR A GAMING SCREEN

VIDEO WORKSHOP

Luisa Preißler and **Klaus Scherwinski** work together to create the artwork for a four-panel dungeon master's screen

Artist
PROFILE

Luisa Preißler and Klaus Scherwinski

LOCATION: Germany

Klaus creates storyboards for game trailers and films, and Luisa paints book covers. Together they illustrate RPGs like The Dark Eye.
www.luisapreissler.de
https://ifxm.ag/klauss

In this workshop we highlight the artistic factors we have to consider when tackling one of the most complex tasks any fantasy illustrator could face: painting a four- panel dungeon master's screen illustration!

Because the two of us often team up for complex illustrations we know the benefits of working in tandem with one artist excelling at composition and figure work (Klaus) and the other artist (Luisa) being an expert at staging colour and light. When one of us paints, the other

defaults to the art director role, lending a fresh eye to each iteration. Swapping the digital artwork back and forth and sometimes working simultaneously on different parts of the painting might sound complex, but we think teaming up is well worth the effort.

1 Create a loose sketch with simple perspective

Arranging eight very different characters in one illustration can be a daunting proposition. Here, the KISS rule (keep it simple, stupid!) applies to perspective more than anything else. We're choosing a simple one-point perspective with a horizon line low enough that we don't have to worry about drawing stairs, or having walls lean in on the far right and left due to lens distortion. A low angle also suggests that the viewer is even deeper down in the dungeon, which is another plus point! ➜

2 When in doubt, draw a map

If you have 15 years of experience drawing composition in line art (like Klaus) you might be able to guess at a lot of things. But as this screen wraps around four panels it's a good idea to see if your characters are actually visible in a symmetrical environment, such as a dungeon built with pillars and doorway arches arranged in a regular way. Hence this map, where X marks… the camera!

3 Lay down line art to stage the characters

Because the character designs were provided to us by the game's art director Nadine Schäkel, we just have to decide how we want to place them. Going with something iconic (some would say stereotypical) for the subject matter, we have the valiant knight shielding the vulnerable maid. Here we also decide on the correct poses and actions for the other characters, which, out of necessity, have to fan out over the other panels.

4 Lighting the dungeon environment

Even in a dingy dungeon we have to get some light into the scene! Giving a character a torch is the easiest way, but this doesn't work for everybody if we want to keep the art interesting. Luisa drops some moonlight into this first colour rough, which brings in atmosphere and depth. Having the mage cast a light spell makes sense from an in-game point of view and gives us more options for different types of light, too.
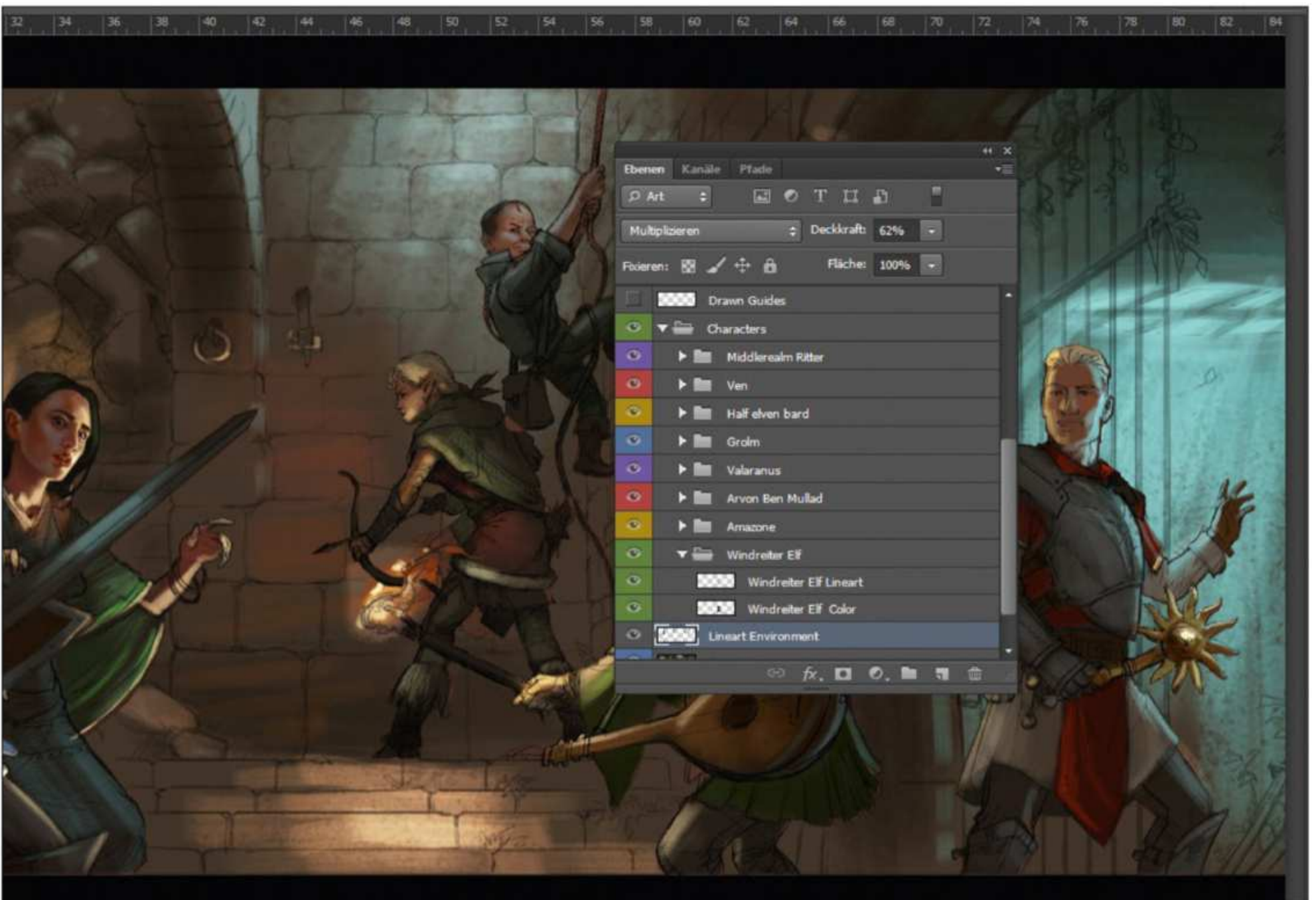
5 Keeping things organised by using layer groups

We keep each character in a separate layer group. We have layers for line art, underpainting, and adding textures and special effects. This enables us to work on different parts of the painting on different computers simultaneously, and move figures around if necessary. Working in a team enables you to get more work done faster – potentially a deciding factor for companies that are commissioning in-depth illustration jobs. ⋙
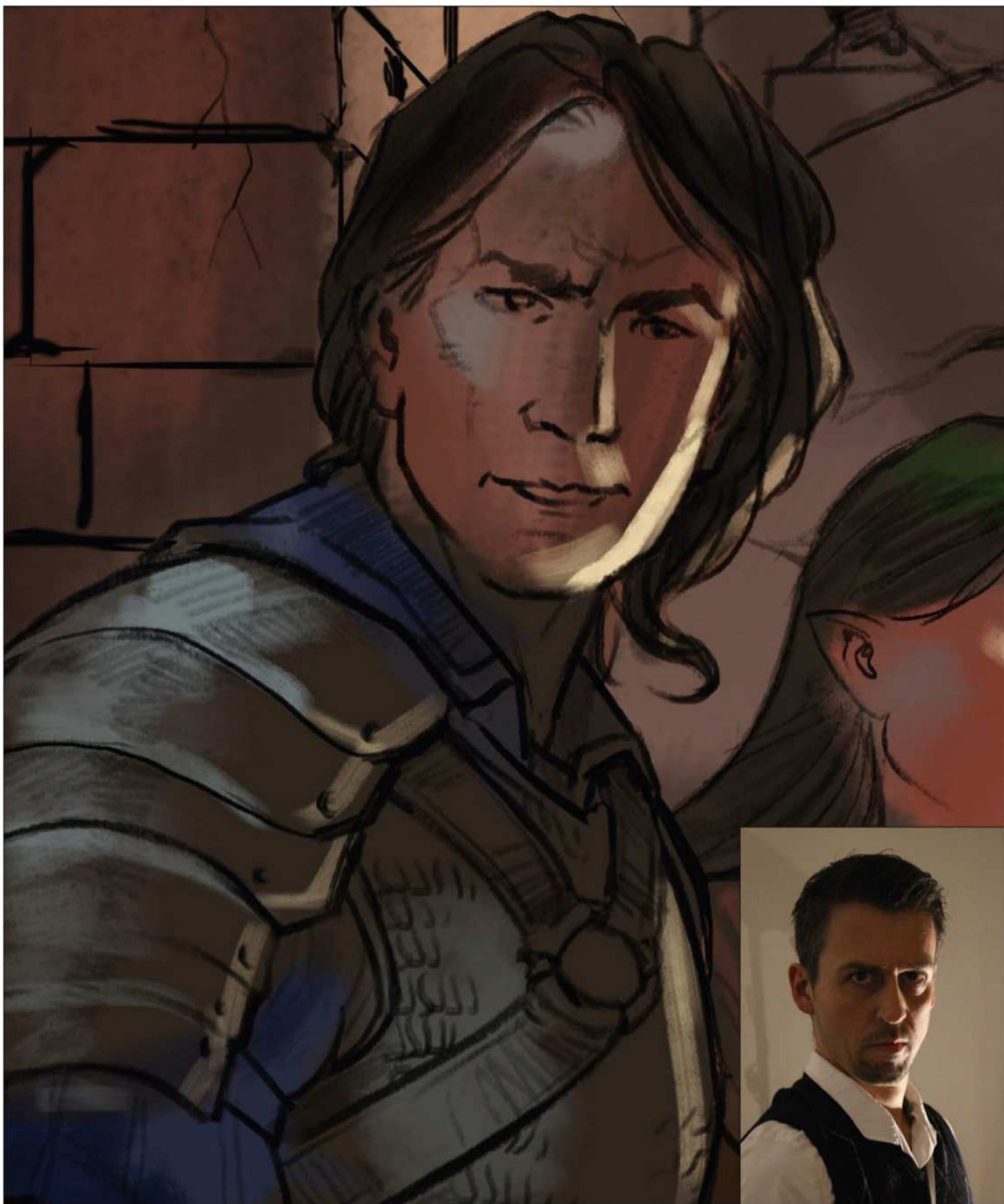
Getting the characters' faces right

6 Luisa decides to start with the knight. He'll be our focus point for this painting because his face is featured most prominently, and thus demands dramatic lighting and a convincing facial expression. In the sketch he still looks a bit goofy, so that's the first thing we should fix. A good old mirror, an online reference search and shooting your own reference should help!

7 Lighting the face

Asking a friend to model for you always helps push the realism, especially with such a specific lighting scenario. Knowing where the light falls on the cheekbones, nose and lips is a huge time-saver. The dramatic light from the torch leaves half of his face in shadow, but that doesn't mean we can neglect it! Luisa uses a slight blue/grey bounce light from the top of the dungeon to subtly sculpt the planes of the face and make it look more three-dimensional.

8 Giving the hair a more realistic appearance

In order to be consistent with lighting, the knight's hair needs some highlights, too. Luisa tries to treat it as a big mass of strands, not individual hairs. She looks at some pictures of how black hair looks when overexposed by an orange light source and notices that it becomes a saturated orange before turning black. She paints in a few strands so the hair looks more tousled and he doesn't look like he just stepped straight out of a salon!

9 Consider the details

Always keep in mind how big the face will be on the final product. That's easy to forget while you're zoomed in – often Luisa has the face open at full screen size, but of course it won't be printed this big. In this case it won't be larger than a coin so don't go overboard with detail and try to simplify. Not every skin pore needs to be visible! After all, the other seven characters are still waiting for their artistic treatment…

10 Make reference your preference

Apart from getting images from the internet to know what a harness or sword looks like, you'll always push your artwork further if you shoot your own reference. Don't trust your mental library! Even if you only use parts of a photo, the extra information about drapery, light and shadow, or simply if a pose is realistic, can be invaluable. Can you spot where we used these hands in the final illustration? And again, the photo shoot is much easier when you work with a friend. ➡➤

11 Developing different lighting scenarios

Because this illustration will eventually feature across a dungeon master's screen, we're challenged to create a piece of artwork that will look good as a single painting, while having four distinct parts that work individually. Making all panels lit by torches would unify the lighting, but it would also make all four parts too similar for our taste. While we want the middle part to have the most normal and accessible lighting setup, we decide to dip the far-right panel into a cold moonlight blue. On the left we notice that our first approach from step four was deviating too far from the rest. We change the green to a dull beige/yellow because it feels more natural and blends well with the overall image.

12 Illustrating a light spell

The biggest risk when illustrating a light spell is overdoing it by going nuts with the Color Dodge tool and putting glowing highlights everywhere! Remember that light doesn't always reveal more details – it can also obscure things. Especially in a dungeon basement with high humidity, the light particles between the characters and the camera would blur things together. So instead of adding a yellow-ish radial gradient on a Vivid Light blend mode or such, we choose a Normal layer on a low Opacity. This approach evens out lights and shadows on the characters and gives us more depth. In the end, depth is more important than detail.
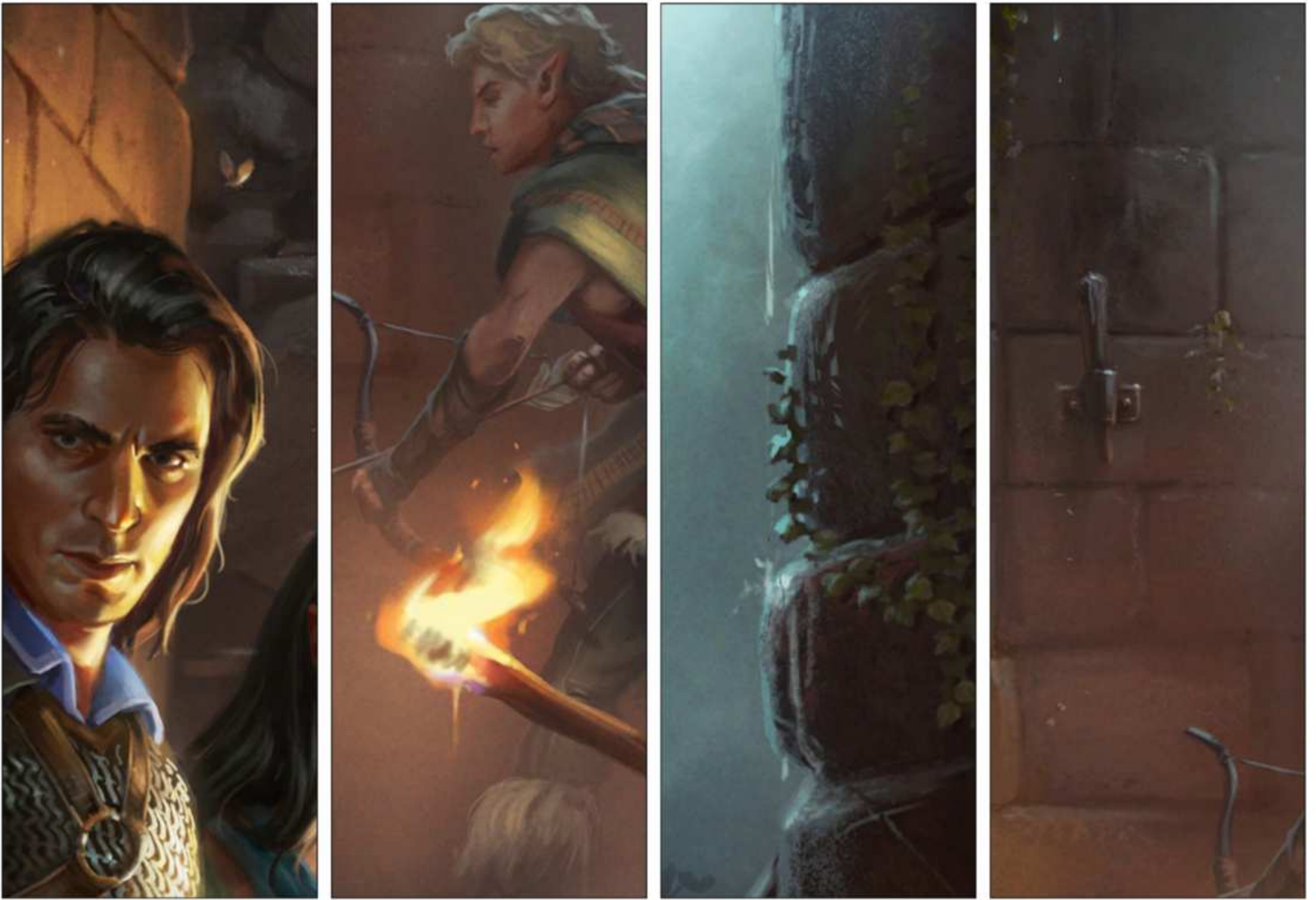
13 Adding magical details to the scene

A great way to give images more punch is adding "particles". This refers to any and all small, punctual pops in colour and/or contrast. They work best in strategic places, not all over the image. It can be dust particles or insects caught in the moonlight, water droplets falling from the ceiling, highlights on wet surfaces or embers from a torch. For Klaus this is the most fun part of the painting apart from the compositional sketch.

14 Bringing it all together

After letting the painting rest for a full day we look at the image with a fresh eye to spot bad tangents or other mistakes. We merge down Photoshop layers, including a very faint grain layer so everything goes together even smoother. Luckily, we can always have the guides from the layout document pop up (via Ctrl+H) so we can check that nothing important gets cropped off in the bleed or under the border layout, which we now throw back into the file. If you want to see what the final product looks like, check out the video that accompanies this workshop.

Photoshop, Modo & Daz 3D
DESIGN A POST-APOCALYPTIC ENVIRONMENT

Learn how to use 3D tools to streamline and enhance your workflow, with concept artist **Philipp Scherer**

Artist
PROFILE

Philipp Scherer
LOCATION: Germany

Philipp is a freelance concept artist working on a range of projects for games and films.
http://ifxm.ag/pscherer

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 8 now!

I'd like to begin by pointing out that the workflow behind this image isn't limited to Modo, Daz 3D or Photoshop. My process can be applied to any similar art software. As a matter of fact I'm switching to Blender for much of my 3D work. However, I still have to learn a lot so I'm sticking with Modo for now.

In the following workshop I'll show you how I approach the creation of an environment with the help of 3D. Because I'd like to show a figure in my image, I'm using Daz 3D. The program is ideal for posing

characters. I'll explain each of these steps in the following pages, and show why planning ahead is crucial when working to a deadline.

While brainstorming a subject I came across the latest trailer for the video game The Last of Us, which inspired me to create a city in ruins. However, I wanted to add a slight twist: instead of plant life blossoming and taking over the city, nature is struggling because water is in short supply. Only dry grass can survive in this environment. The viewer is exploring this urban wasteland when they're suddenly surprised by a stranger… ➤➤

1 Develop the composition with a sketch

Now that I've established the bare bones of a story, I can start doing some quick sketching. I want something really bold and simple, so I try to establish a lot of lines that all point towards the focal point: the stranger. I use the vanishing lines as well as objects visible in the scene to achieve this. My aim is to develop a simple yet strong graphic composition. I comp in photographs to speed up the process.

2 Create a 3D scene with pre-exisiting models

Luckily, I find some free buildings on TurboSquid (**www.turbosquid.com**) that suit my setting perfectly. I place them in my 3D scene so that they match my earlier composition sketch. I create a camera, then start placing all the main elements – even if it's only a placeholder cube.

3 Pose the character in Daz 3D

Daz 3D enables you to create a character that you can shape (make them skinny, muscular or obese, say), texture and then pose – all without leaving the application. You can export the character to the 3D application of your choice. I usually go back and forth between Modo and Daz 3D until the character is posed to my liking.

4 Dressing the scene

I'm dressing the scene with objects from previous projects and free objects that I find online. I'm constantly checking the position of the objects from my camera's PoV so I can create a visually pleasing arrangement. I'm searching for interesting angles and overlaps to establish an easy read of the environment.

5 Adjust my light sources

Now that everything is in place I take the image into Modo and start adjusting the light's direction and intensity so it supports my composition. Once rendered I rearrange some of the objects, because they're casting awkward shadows in the wrong places. I take my time over this step until I'm happy with the results. ➤➤
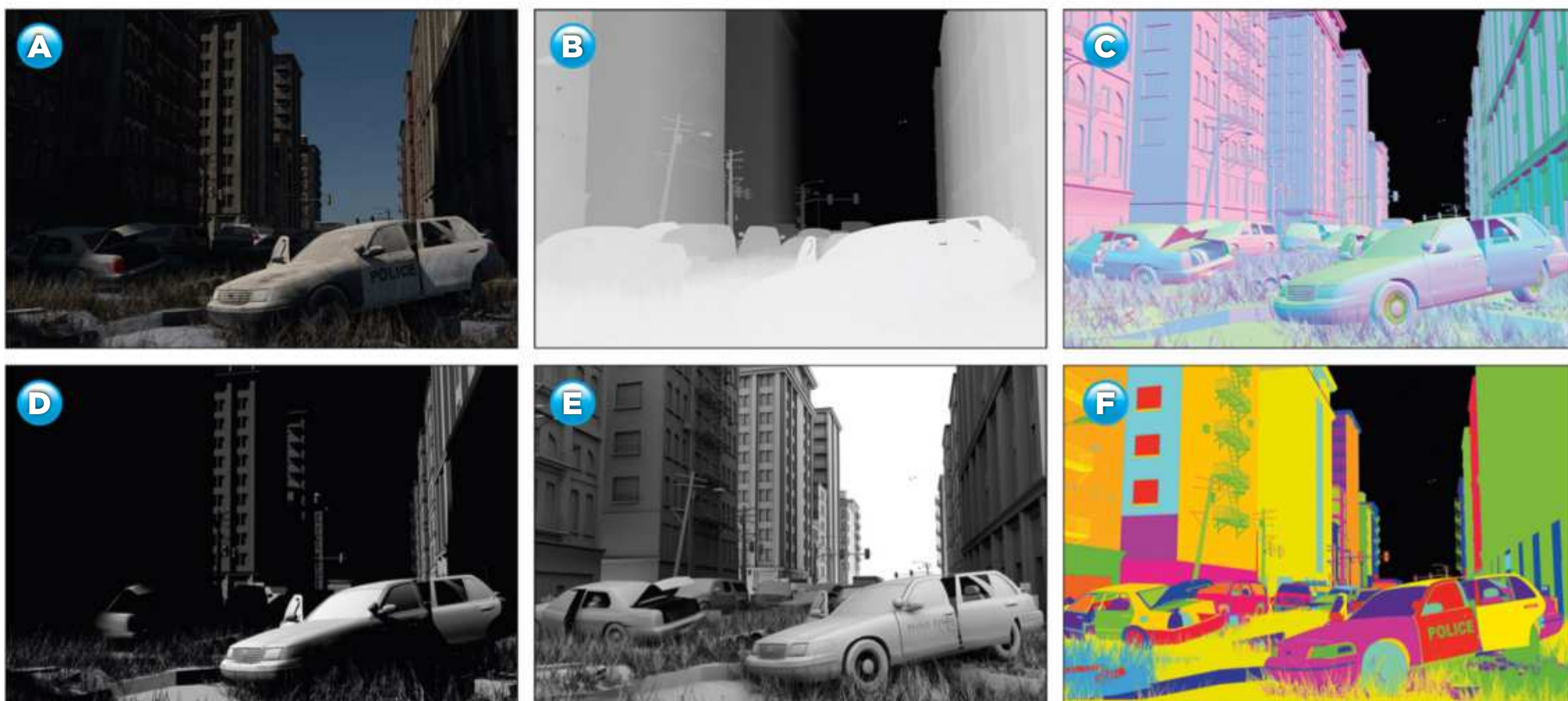
6 Produce a range of render outputs

Still in Modo, I create various render outputs that help me when painting over the image. The outputs are: final colour output (A), depth output (B), shading normal output (C), direct light output (D), ambient occlusion output (E) and surface ID output (F). Depending on the scene, I might add other output to give me more flexibility later on (for example, when working with subsurface scattering objects).

7 Scuff up surfaces with dirt and dust

As you can see in step five the render is very clean. Normally, I'd have to manually go over each surface to break them up. To save time I add a shader that adds dirt and dust to every surface. This doesn't need to be perfect: its purpose is to simply break up these perfect 3D surfaces.

8 **Quickly generate dry grass in the environment**
I use a fur shader to indicate patches of dry grass. The height and placement is controlled by a noise map that I can adjust to my liking. At this point I also readjust the intensity of the dirt material so that it's not covering up the base materials too much.
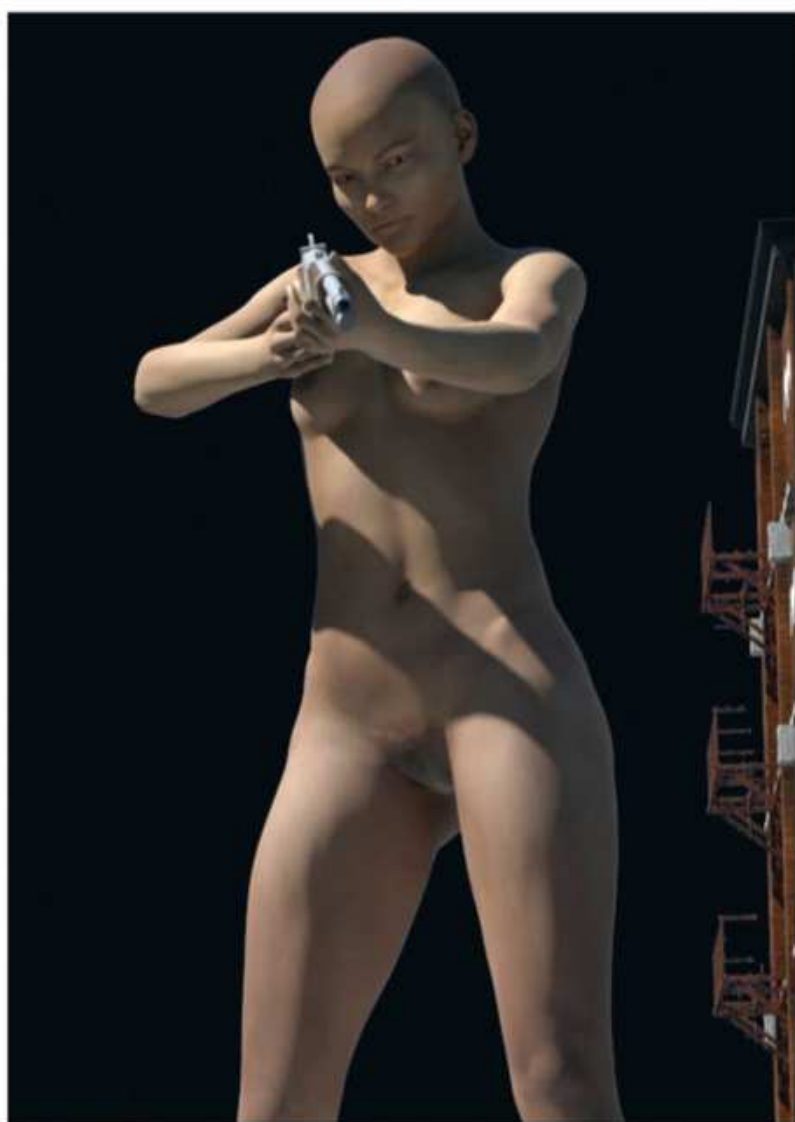
9 **Render the character**
I render the character separately from the environment, so I can adjust the lighting on her independently. I try to stick closely to my environment's lighting, but use artistic licence where necessary. Trying to get both looking perfect in a single render might take too much time. My approach is: if it looks right, it is right.
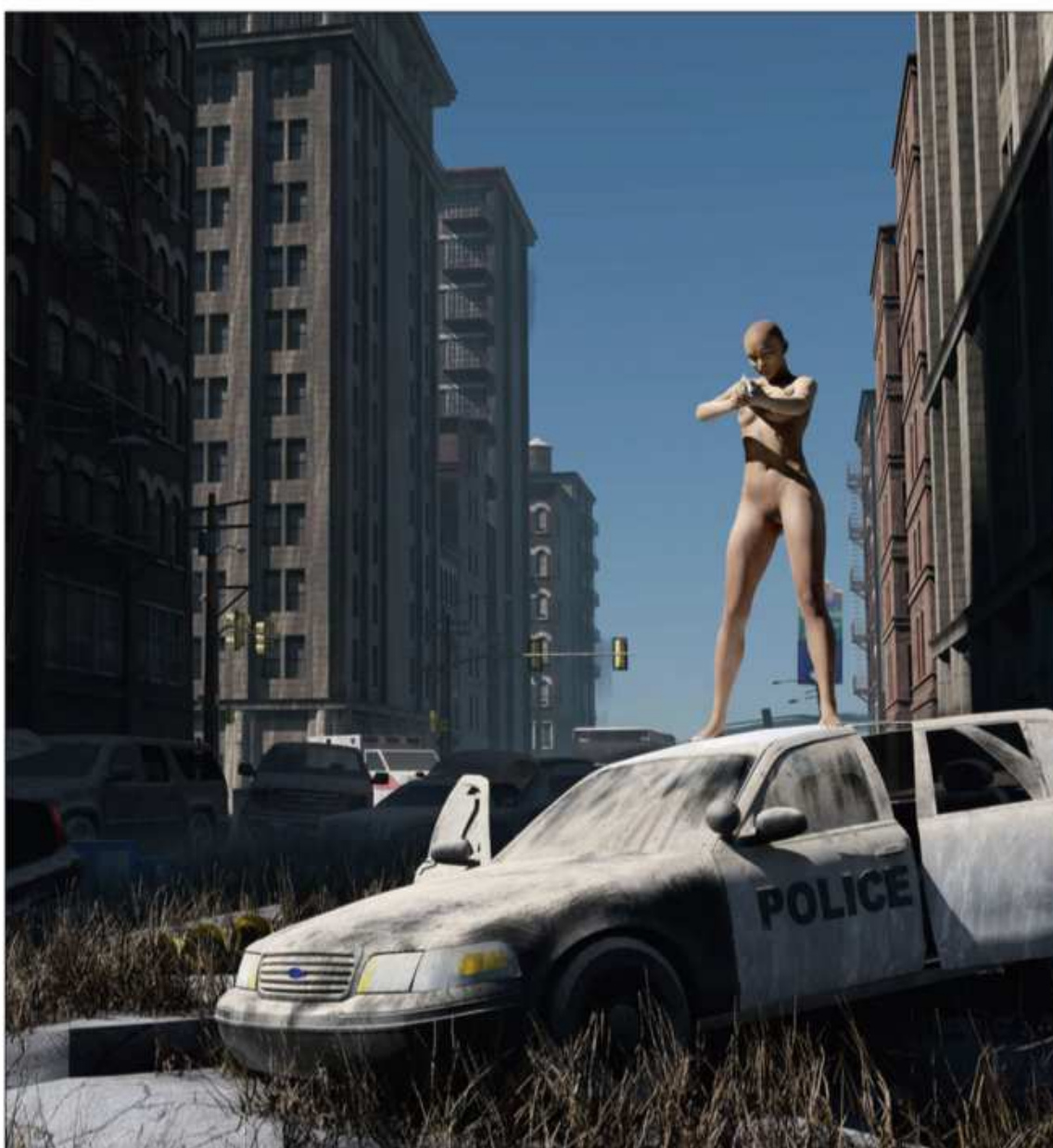
10 **Adding depth to the scene**
This is where my different render outputs come in handy. I use the depth output to mask in aerial perspective. For a more dramatic effect I increase the contrast in the depth output to increase the "fog" falloff. ➡➡

11 Adding a background plate of more tower blocks

I use various photo elements to create a background plate in Photoshop. I want to imply that the character is standing between us and a potential destination downtown. At this point it's important to say that you should stay true to your vision and don't be a slave to your photos.

12 Weathering and aging

Even though our dirt and weathering shader in step seven has helped a lot, I still have to paint some weathering on the more important areas, such as the police car in the foreground. I also take this opportunity to emphasise the light hitting the elements in the scene.

13 Character design and storytelling

How did the figure manage to get so close without being noticed? I decide that she used a hand-made ghillie suit and camouflage to hide in the grass. Details like this are important to create a believable image so I start refining the focal point. Looking at this now, I think I should have done this earlier.

14 Finishing up and post-processing touches

To make the idea of the character using a ghillie suit more realistic I add taller grass. Then I sharpen the image and add chromatic abberation to soften the edges again. I feel that this adds a nice touch of colour to the image. Finally I add a noise layer to break up the smaller, even surfaces.

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX
Reviews

The latest art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team…

5 PRODUCTS ON TEST
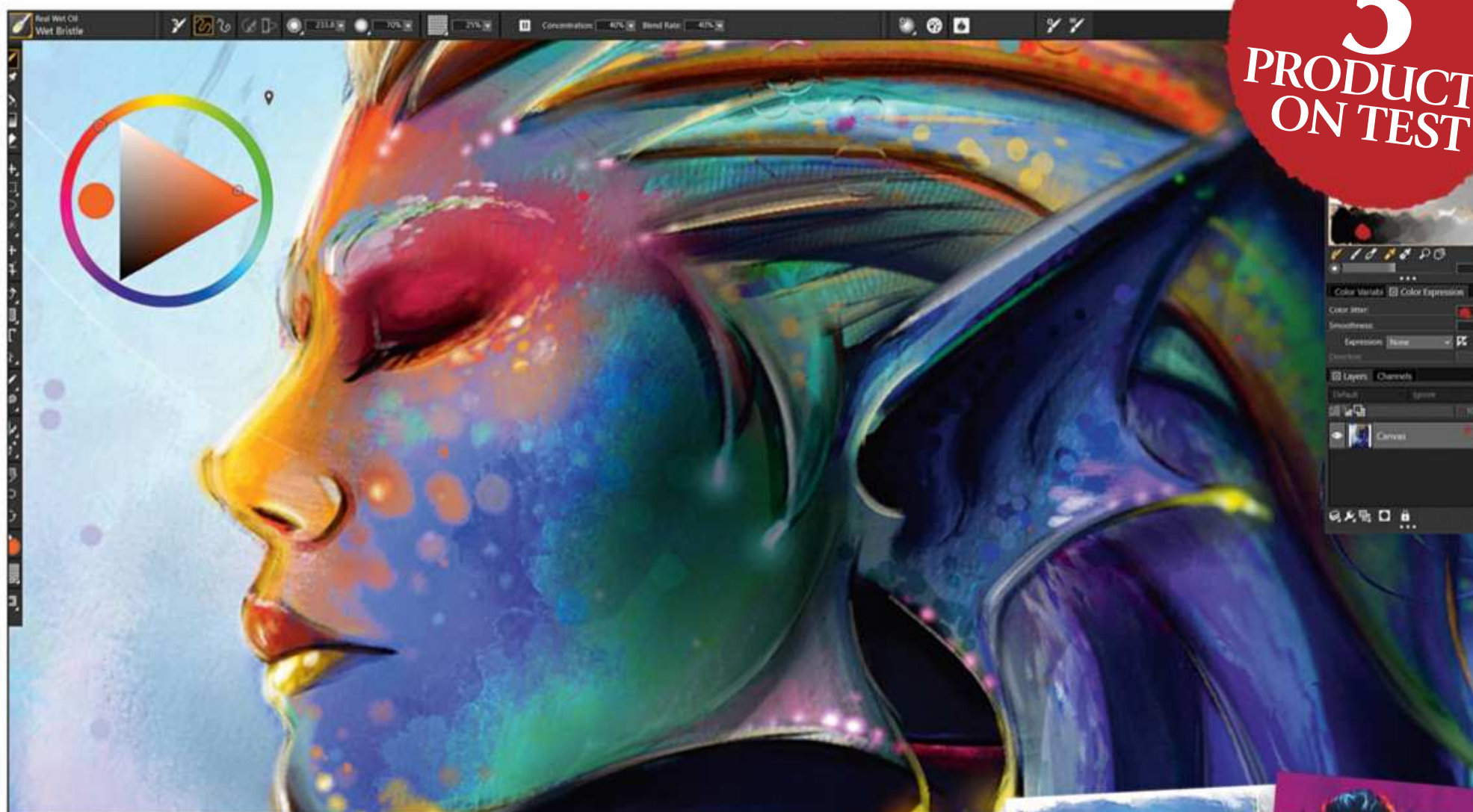
HARDWARE

92 Painter 2019

The leading traditional media painting program is now faster than ever, but what else is new under the hood?

TRAINING

95 Painting Animals From Life

James Gurney reveals the sketching and gouache techniques he uses to capture the likeness of a subject that rarely stays still.

BOOKS

96 Selling The Movie: The Art of the Film Poster

Chart the history of cinema, design and the course of the twentieth century in this look back at promo box office imagery.

97 The Art of Ni no Kuni II: Revenant Kingdom

Cast your eyes over a plethora of concept art from the latest instalment of the popular gaming series.

97 The Art and Making of Preacher

Take a look at how the cult comic series turned hit TV show came into being.

RATINGS EXPLAINED ★★★★★ Magnificent   ★★★★ Great   ★★★ Good   ★★ Poor   ★ Atrocious
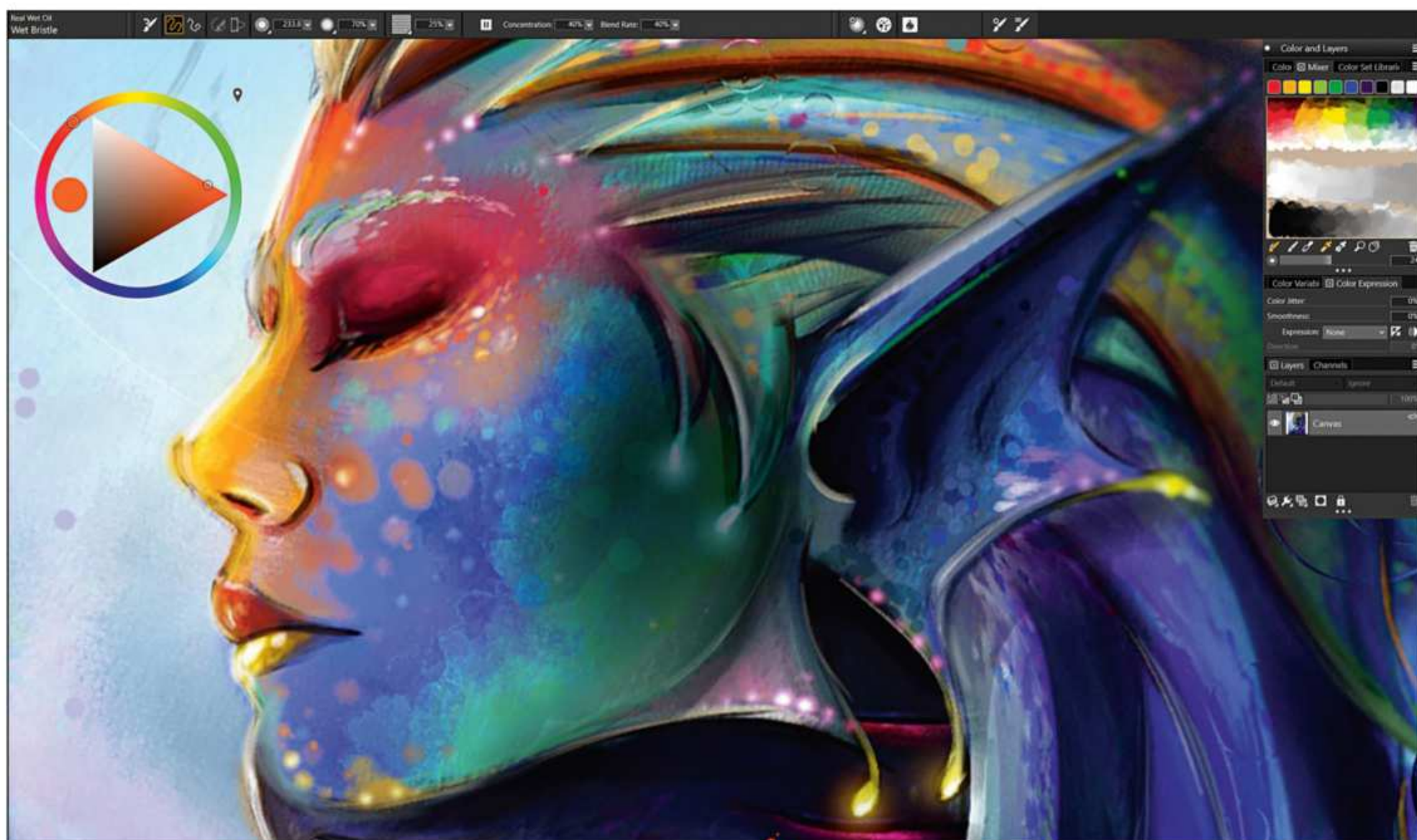
The speed enhancements will be noticeable even if you're using an older computing setup. Art by Stefano Pistonatto.

Painter 2019

MAC & PC

SPEED DEMON The leading traditional media painting program is now faster than ever, but what else is new under the hood?

Price £360 (£180, upgrade version) **Company** Corel **Web** www.painterartist.com

Here's what everyone has been waiting for: a new version of Corel Painter that places its focus on performance and usability.

The expanded Brushes options includes new Pattern Pens, which produce strokes that make use of five new patterns. These can be based on an existing pattern library, but you can also create your own – essential when

Painter 2019 now offers artists an updated and enhanced Pattern library, providing more creative opportunities.
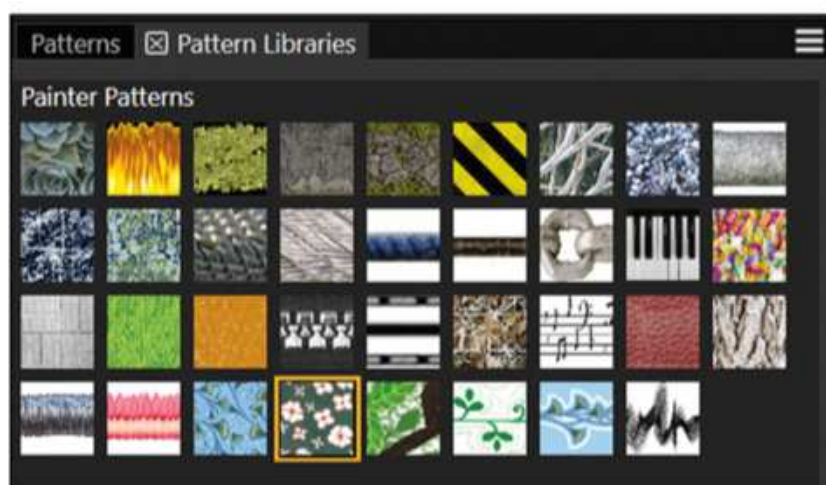
making original concept art. Elsewhere, the updated and enhanced version of the Real Watercolor wet brushes are able to realistically interact with your chosen paper's texture and grain. Your colours will flow, mix and be absorbed by the paper, making your art look more natural than ever.

Another update is the Color Selection tool. The colour choices are clearer and you can pin the Temporal Color Selector wherever you need it on your in-progress artwork, and use shortcuts to take samples with the Eyedropper. This is handy, especially when creating complex illustrations.

The colour of the program's interface has also been revamped. Its

darker tone makes it possible to see colours more clearly, and also helps you to focus on the canvas when painting – particularly useful when illustrating dark objects. However, if you miss the old grey interface, you can easily change it back.

Previous versions of Painter had a cluttered interface. Corel must have been listening to feedback from its customers, because version 2019 now features over 650 redesigned icons that bring a welcome simplicity to the workspace. This clean and responsive environment makes Painter 2019 easier to understand for newcomers, while seasoned users will benefit from a more efficient painting experience.

> 66 **Painter 2019 now features over 650 redesigned icons that bring a welcome simplicity to the workspace** 99
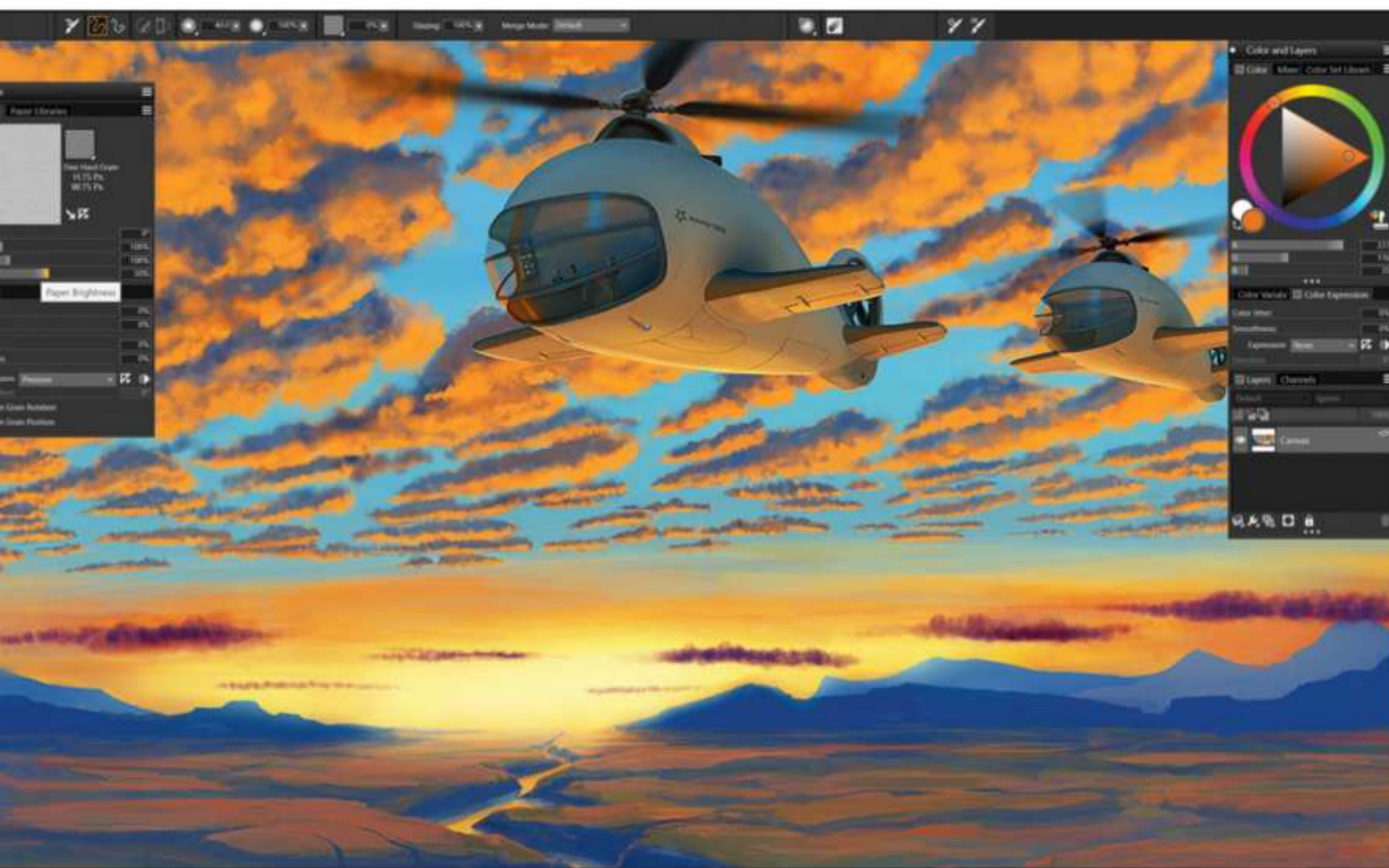
The new Dark Theme user interface, seen here behind Dmytro Bidnyak's artwork, will help artists focus on their developing work.

The new stamps brushes will certainly make an impact, as demonstrated in Ajmal Mohammed's fantasy figure art.

The key update of Painter 2019 is the improvement in the application's performance. Previously, the program had a reputation for running slowly on older machines. This is certainly not the case with the new version. Corel is to be congratulated for eliminating many speed bumps while retaining the feeling of painting traditionally.

For example, one of the problems with the old version was the noticeable lag that occurred when using the brushes, but now the brush engine works as smooth as silk. There are still some little quirks – sometimes it slows up on multi-touch operations, and there are a few bugs that need to be addressed – but overall the program's come on a long way since version 2018. What a difference a year makes…

We think that Painter is still the leading traditional media painting program, and the improvements make it look even more appealing. Yes, there are cheaper alternatives such as Rebelle 3 and ArtRage 5, but neither program has the painting power that Painter wields. Still not convinced? Download the 30-day trial from the Corel site and see for yourself.

DETAILS

Features
- New Pattern Pens
- Enhanced watercolour brushes
- Enhanced colour selection tool
- Performance enhancements
- Dark user interface
- New application icons and controls
- Enhanced brush ghosting
- Enhanced multi-touch options
- Stamps
- Enhanced thick paint brushes

System Requirements
PC: Windows 10, 8.1 or 7 (64-bit), Intel Core 2 or AMD Athlon 64 CPU, 2GHz or faster, 2GB RAM, 1GB hard disk space, 1,280x800 screen resolution
Mac: OS X 10.13, 10.12 or 10.11, multicore Intel CPU with 64-bit support, 2GB RAM, 750 MB hard disk, 1,280x800 screen resolution

Rating
★★★★☆

ARTIST INTERVIEW
BRIAN VALEZA
Gunship Revolution's creative director tests the latest Painter…

What do you think of the new version of Corel Painter?
I like that the program looks a lot more sleek – in particular the new, darker version of the interface. I think that's useful because it helps me focus on the artwork that I'm painting.

What's the most improved aspect of the latest version?
The significant speed enhancement! It's a noticeable improvement compared to the previous versions of the program.

How do you use Corel Painter in your workflow?
For my day job Painter is one of my main tools for creating initial concept designs for our clients. It's also the program I use to finalise the illustrations that feature in our card games.

How long have you been using Corel Painter?
I've been painting with Corel's flagship program since 2008 and I adore how it's able to mimic the feel of working in traditional media. I'm using it more often these days, especially on card game illustrations for our clients, because the traditional feel really helps make the artwork pop.

How do you think Painter could improve in the future?
While I've been happy with the way that Corel has chosen to keep brushes organised in the previous versions of Painter, sometimes things can start to get cluttered. I hope that the company's developers can take a new approach to brush organisation, as well as add more brush options and ideally a brush creation module, too.

Brian is Gunship Revolution's creative director. He's worked on properties including G.I. Joe, Transformers and Star Wars.

www.gunshiprevolution.com

James Gurney knows that Smooth the husky-cross has a favourite spot by the window, so he sets up his painting kit nearby.

This painting is actually a composite that shows what different stablehands were doing at different times.

With the basics of the horse and environment laid down, James chooses one of the positions that a stablehand adopts and starts painting his scene.

In Painting Animals From Life, James shows how he works in co-operation with animal behaviour so he can capture them on paper.

Painting Animals From Life

PAWS FOR THOUGHT Master illustrator James Gurney tackles a deceptively difficult subject, as he reveals his tips for capturing the essence of animals

Through his dinosaur work in particular, animals have become one of James Gurney's specialities, and he shares his expertise at painting them in his latest video.

Usually, James features more projects of shorter duration in his videos, but this time he's opted to present just two projects: a study of Smooth, his son's husky-cross as he looks out the window; and a painting of Princess, a horse enjoying a wash.

The main problem with painting animals from life is that unless they're asleep, they're unlikely to stay still. A bonus segment after the two main videos offers some practical tips for getting animals to co-operate with your modelling requirements, but your main weapons are keen observation and a good visual memory.

For Smooth, James establishes a set pose early on, then looks for moments when at least part of Smooth (such as his head position) is in a similar pose, or uses his memory when Smooth is being unwittingly unhelpful. James makes it look easy, but there's some serious skill being applied to make this work: you'll likely need plenty of practice before you can pull this off.

Princess is enjoying her wash so much that she keeps fairly still, but the staff milling about her at the stable are another story. Here, James assembles a composite image based on the poses that the stablehands adopt at different times. He ends up with a moment that didn't happen as it's presented, but represents a broader period of time in one image.

Both projects are as absorbing as you'd expect from James. There's plenty of advice on colour, values and making corrections with physical paint media, as well as lots of local character from the locations that he uses.

DETAILS

Topics covered
- Initial composition
- Laying down colour washes
- Dealing with moving subjects
- Composite images
- Colour and value

Length
69 minutes

Rating
★★★★☆

ARTIST PROFILE
JAMES GURNEY

James specialises in painting realistic images of scenes that can't be photographed. He's also a plein air painter and sketcher, believing that making studies from observation fuels his imagination. James taught himself to draw by reading books about Norman Rockwell and Howard Pyle. He has a degree in anthropology, but chose a career in art. James has written the instruction books Imaginative Realism and Color and Light.

www.gurneyjourney.blogspot.com
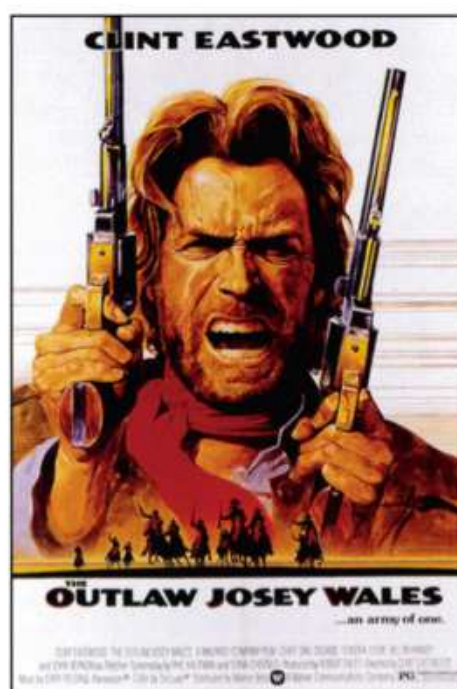
Selling The Movie: The Art of the Film Poster

REEL TIME Chart the history of cinema, design and the course of the twentieth century in this look back at promo box office imagery

Author Ian Haydn Smith **Publisher** White Lion Publishing **Price** £25 **Web** www.quartoknows.com **Available** October

There's a game you can play while reading through this book: spot the ones from various bedrooms in your life. Maybe Steinlen's Chat Noir poster takes you back to student dorms, or perhaps your edgy cousin stuck Scarface above their bed after they smoked their first joint.

No matter which ones connect with you, this book is a great reminder that film posters have infiltrated our lives in a way that few mediums can. There's

The lineage of early French cinema posters can be traced in part to the legendary lithography poster for the Moulin Rouge.

more to Selling The Movie than nostalgia, though. Over the course of nearly 300 pages, author Ian Haydn Smith does an admirable job of condensing the history of movie posters from around the world.

In his introduction Ian confesses that such a story is never going to be comprehensive. Bollywood posters, for example, could comfortably fill up their own book and barely scratch the surface of the genre. So what we get is a westward-leaning account with

> ❝ Each chapter looks at notable designers and movements of the time ❞

smatterings of international cinema posters to round off the tale.

After Ian's introduction we're given an outline of the origins of the film poster, complete with a look at how they evolved from designs used for advertisements and public announcements. Then the chapters are split into decades, starting from 1910. Each chapter contains sub-sections that look at notable designers and movements of the time, along with posters that defined each decade. It's

Bill Gold used red, white and blue to signify James Cagney's embodiment of the American dream.

fascinating to track how attitudes change and how historical events shape aesthetics. Blaxploitation, China's Fifth Generation of filmmakers and Italian neorealism to name but a few all get a look in, as readers get a primer in every aspect of cinematic history.

And that's one of the joys of this book: there's none of the film-buff pretension weighing it down. Whether you're a cinephile or a lantern show luddite, anyone can find a way into the story of the film poster. Just be sure to grab some popcorn first.

RATING ★★★★★

The Art of Ni no Kuni II: Revenant Kingdom

VISUAL FEAST Cast your eyes over a plethora of concept art from the latest instalment of the popular gaming series

Author N/A **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

Not familiar with the role-playing game Ni no Kuni? Then you'll be none the wiser by the time you're finished looking through the art that's presented here.

The series, developed by Level-5, has won praise for its game and designs over the years, which makes it

Detail from end-of-level boss Brineskimmer. The book only contains concept art – there are no screenshots of the final designs in action.

all the more frustrating that we don't get nary a sentence from the creative team in this full-colour art book.

With Studio Ghibli character designer Yoshiyuki Momose involved in the game's look and feel, the absence of insight feels even more like a missed opportunity. However, what we do get are 16 chapters of beautifully developed traditional and digital artwork.

Covering everything from dumpling spoons and brooches through to dragons and epic cities, fans of the game are spoilt with a wealth of imagery that touches on everything they could possibly be interested in.

And really that's who this book is aimed at: fans. Fans who won't need

The chapter on Hydropolis covers both its varied architecture and the citizens of the city.

explanatory notes detailing characters they're already familiar with, fans who know the world and are ready for some behind-the-scenes visuals. But even then, those new to the game will find plenty to be mesmerised by.

RATING ★★★☆☆

The Art and Making of Preacher

LORD'S WORK Take a look at how Preacher, the cult comic series turned hit TV show, came to be with this exploration of what makes it tick…

Author Paul Davies **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £24 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

According to the AMC series Preacher, Hell is "the worst cinema multiplex experience ever devised," as people relive their life's worst memory over and over.

This gives you an idea of how, over two seasons, Preacher has found new spins on ancient imagery. The hit show, based on the comic series by Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon, sees stetson-wearing angels wielding

The three leads from Preacher in a scene that involves talking rather than fighting.

chainsaws duke it out in a world where God has gone missing.

Echoing the flawed world of Preacher, the book only partially delivers on its promise to cover the art and making of the show. The majority of its 192 pages are given over to glossy photos highlighting key characters and scenes, together with actor bios and insights on how the look of Preacher was crafted. The art angle could have been nicely complemented
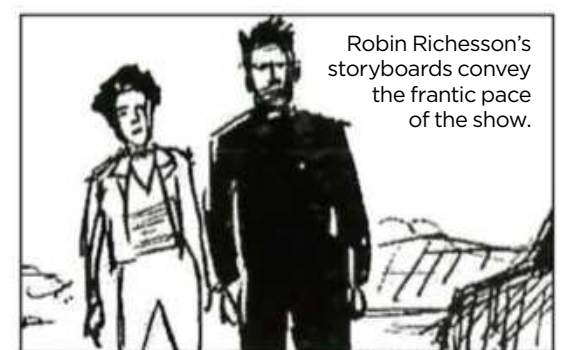
Robin Richesson's storyboards convey the frantic pace of the show.

with images from the graphic novel source material. Instead you're simply given a chapter of storyboarded action scenes. It's hard not to feel cheated.

With season three now airing, this book is ideal for fans wanting to brush up on their knowledge of the show. But if you're after concepts and art-led discussions from its makers, it's probably time to hit the road.

RATING ★★★☆☆

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX

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Workshops assets are available...
If you see the video workshop badge then you can watch the artist in action. Turn to page 8 to see how you can get hold of the video.

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
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Traditional Artist
Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists

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This issue:

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FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS

Jenna Kass

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Powdered graphite, pencil **WEB:** www.jennakass.com

Jenna likes to explore loss, loneliness and love. "I invite the viewer to explore each piece by using turned away faces and mysterious settings," she says.
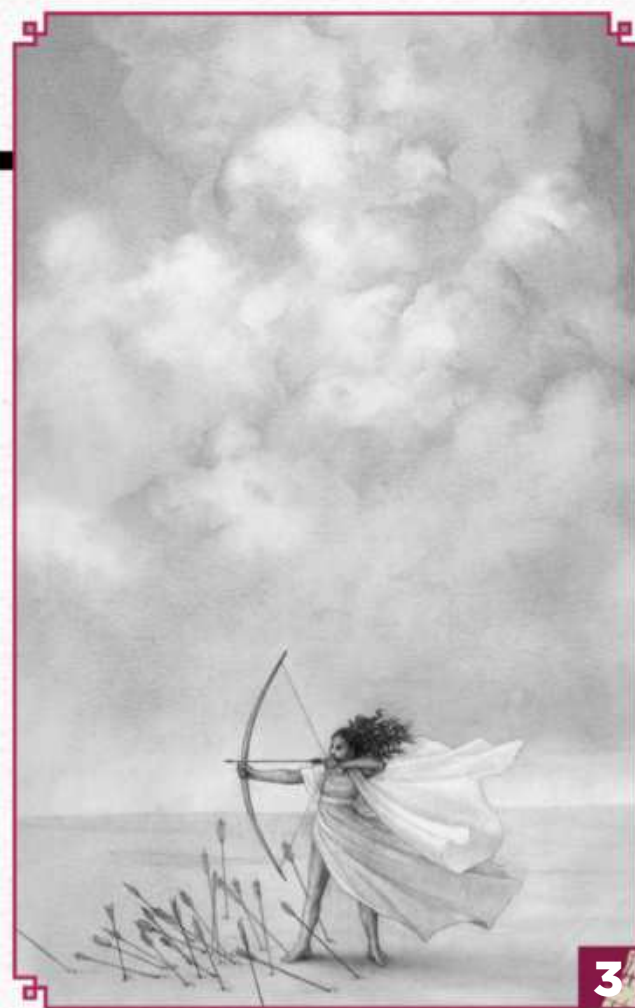
1 THE QUEEN'S RISING

"A queen is destined to rise and lead the battle to reclaim the crown. Inspired by Rebecca Ross' novel, The Queen's Rising, to celebrate warrior women of all walks."

2 LOSS AND LONGING

"I enjoy including uncertainty in my narratives. Did she drown her love? Were they already dead, or did they die for her? She clings to their memory regardless."

3 STEADFAST

"There's so much in the world currently that feels overwhelming. But no matter the odds, it's on us to stand against the onslaught in defiance, however we can."

4 **FIDELIS**
"When Tristan and Iseult died and were buried, King Mark separated their graves. But ivy grew between them, weaving them together; even in death they remained steadfastly entwined."

Jose Mertz

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Graphite, acrylic, ball point pen, pencil, watercolour, ink **WEB:** www.osemertz.com

Jose focuses on pushing an experimental, liquid style with inspirations coming from ancient civilisations, science fiction, Eastern philosophy, dreams and the supernatural.

2 HUMANOID+

"An acrylic painting on wood panel. This concept bloomed from the idea of a supreme spiritual awakening that transcends matter."

1 DOS TIGRES

"A recent project I did in Havana, Cuba. It's a wall mural in acrylics, and stands about 12 feet tall."

3 FUSION OMEGA

"It was fun working on this. I used acrylic on canvas, and this painting steadily evolved with over 20 layers of paint before I got to the final result."

Want to submit your work? Visit http://ifxm.ag/getinifx

4 THUNDERHAWK
"I was looking at distorted, morphed-out images and double exposures, which led to this drawing. I also was experimenting with watercolour and attempting to reinvent the traditional portrait layout. I had fun with this piece and will probably make more distorted portraits of imaginary beings in the future."

Pencil *Acrylics* *Watercolour*

15 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR ART

Renowned illustrator TRAN NGUYEN elaborates on her 15 personal tips that will help you hone your artistic prowess when painting on paper

There are many aspects to consider when tackling a painting, both technical and fundamental. What I don't often hear about are the minor tactics that help elevate the art-making. In this workshop I'll focus on techniques that aren't emphasised, particularly ones pertaining to works made with acrylics and coloured pencil. Having an understanding of the basics is important, but it's the tiny nuances that will distinguish your work.

I've been working professionally as a freelance artist for about a decade now, and I'd like to share with you the essential tidbits I've learned along the way, including how I capture the natural glow of skin with acrylic glazing and wax-based pencils.

In addition to the painting tips, I'll elaborate on the necessary measures once a painting has been completed. Finding suitable frames and scanners are key components in preserving your art for the years to come. I hope, in taking a closer look, you'll leave feeling a bit more knowledgeable and inspired. Every artist has their personal art-making tactics that they develop over their years of experience, so keep making art, learn, grow, grow some more, share what you've learned, and keep the inspiration cycle going for others.

Tran is a freelance illustrator, gallery artist, and muralist. She's also Vietnamese and half deaf. You can keep up to date with her artistic journey by visiting www.instagram.com/mynameistran.

1 How to bring objects to life

A common mistake that developing artists make is paying too much attention to the form within the lines of an object, rather than looking at the line itself. Edges are made of coloured lines and tend to be high in chroma. I would suggest that instead of contouring objects with black lines, try using something with medium to high chroma.

For skin, outline the figure with Terracotta and this will give it that natural shimmer. To give objects that are catching light – for example, a blue rooftop on a sunny day – trace its rim with a True blue coloured pencil.

This is also a great way to establish your focal points. The vibrant outer edges help to advance the element to the foreground and draw the viewer's eye.
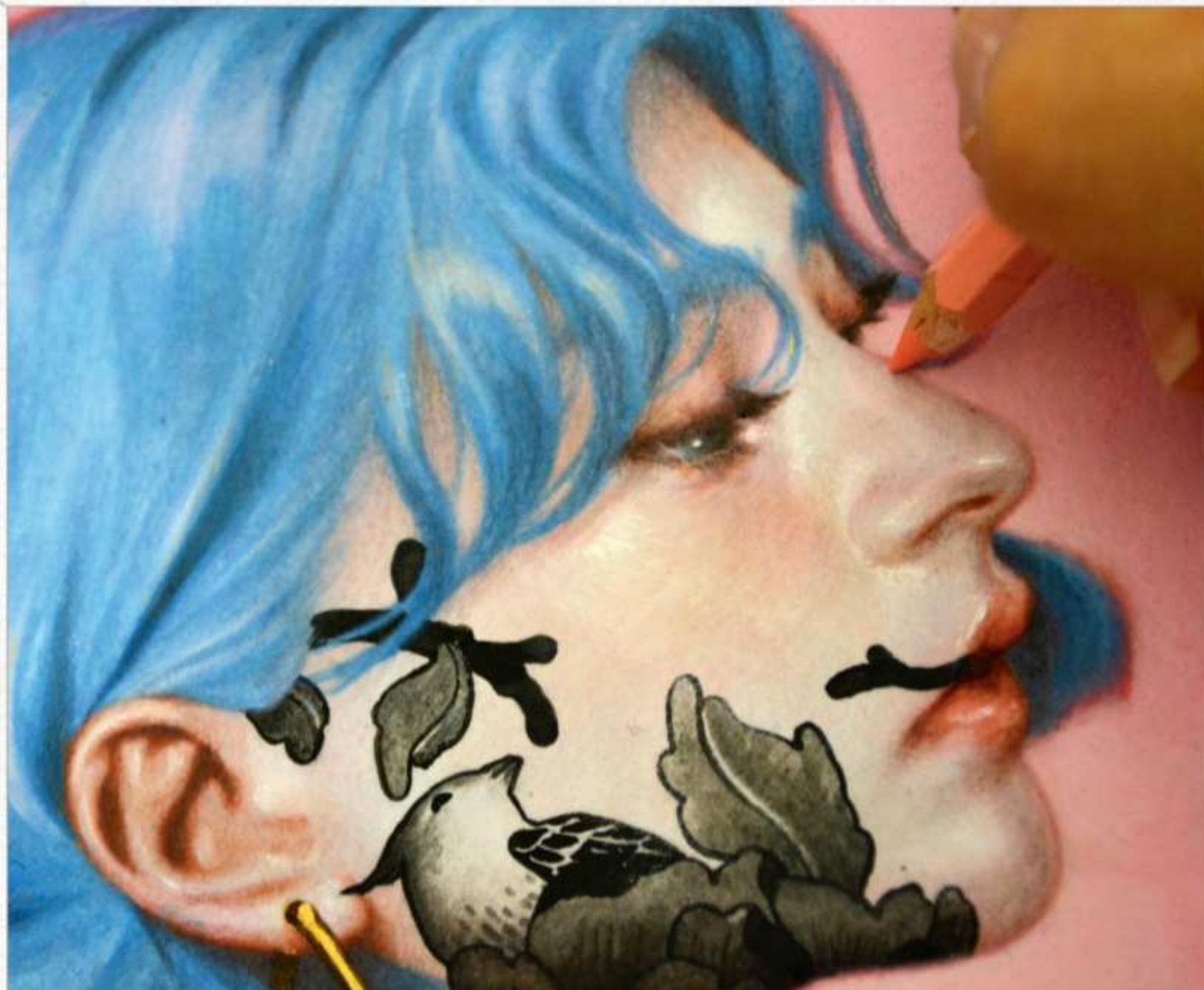
2 Creating colour harmony

When working with an extensive colour palette, it's easy to let it get out of hand, resulting in a gaudy painting full of dissonant colours. A great solution for this is to harmonise your palette by toning the paper with light washes of paint.

After I've transferred my drawing on to hot press watercolour paper, I make a mixture of Brilliant blue and Cadmium red paint, and apply a few thin washes of it. The paper is now a few shades darker with a purple tint to it. Subsequent layers of colour will react to these initial washes, and by sharing this commonality will yield a more cohesive palette.

3 Capturing organic shapes

Water-based paint such as acrylics are ideal for capturing organic shapes including clouds, foliage and fabric. Objects that tend to have a lot of billowing texture can be intimidating, but you'll come to learn that the water does most of the work for you. You just have to be fearless and let go of that innate control mania that lives in all of us.

When rendering these shapes, allow the paint washes to find the forms for you. Be loose with the control of your brush and make strokes that are haphazard and unplanned. Let edges bleed into one another. The less control you have, the more organic the outcome will be.

> ❝ Be loose with the control of your brush and make strokes that are haphazard and unplanned ❞
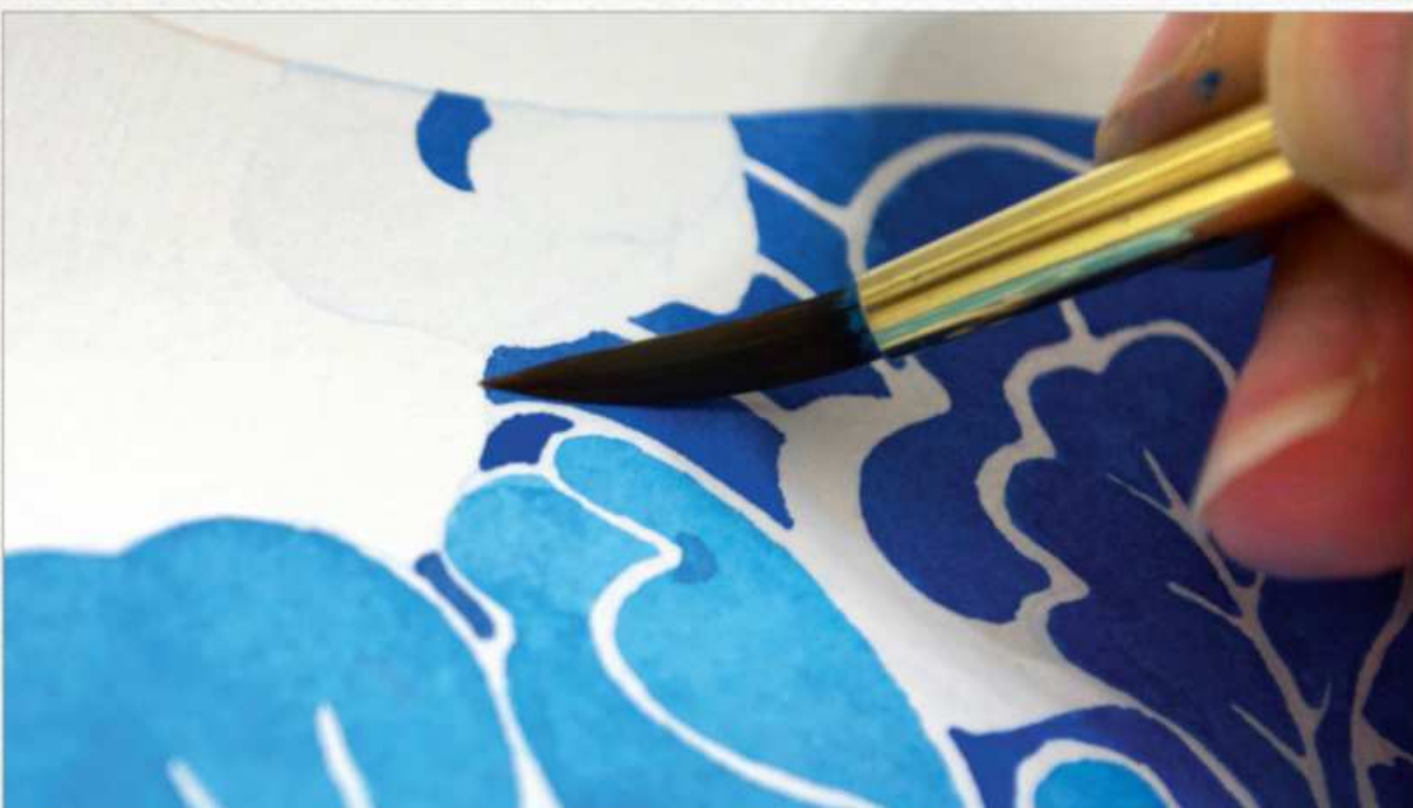
4 Brush in hand

Don't be rigid and approach your brush at every angle. An old bad habit of mine was treating the brush like a .05 mechanical pencil. I would execute each paint stroke with precision and end up with static movement in my figures and their attire. To achieve fluid, organic shapes and gradients, hold your brush loosely and use the full motion of your wrist. Execute your paint strokes by turning the belly of the brush at extreme angles. Don't dab unless necessary. You can also vary the softness of the paint stroke's edge by doing this. ➤➤

5 *A natural glow*

Most of the whites in my paintings are made of the natural white of the paper. On occasions, I'll use Titanium white to highlight, but it's used sparingly. I find that white paint comes across dull: although it's light on the value scale, it's low in vibrancy. I recommend that you plan your painting ahead of time, determining the placement of the highlights. For example, the shine on the female's cheekbone is kept untouched, along with the highlights on her nose and chin.

> 66 **Plan your painting ahead of time, determining the placement of the highlights** 99

6 *Differences among the pencils*

I use two different types of coloured pencils, both wax-based. The Prismacolor Premier pencils are opaque in colour and possess a creamy texture. They have a soft core and will repel water, so it's only used at the end of the painting process to fix mistakes and finalise solid shapes.

The Prismacolor Verithins are made of a thinner, harder wax lead that are most suitable for clean lines and fine details. They tend to be water-soluble, and thus work well with acrylic washes. The Verithins are great for pushing dark values that I find difficult to achieve with acrylic washes and sharpening lines, like the edge of an ear lobe.

7 *Transferring dynamism*

There are different options available when transferring a sketch, either with a projector, light box or my personal favourite, a large-format printer. When transferring via projector and light box, I lose the dynamism that lives in the original sketch. By printing the sketch directly on to the watercolour paper with archival pigments, you can preserve the spirit of the lines as well as saving yourself hours of work.

To prep your sketch for transfer, make sure you lighten it so that it's only barely visible – it's meant to serve as a blueprint, after all. Afterwards, you can redefine the lines by tracing it with coloured pencil.

8 Introducing iridescent embellishments

To add an extra layer of dimension to your work, embellish it with an iridescent quality. Gold leaf and Pebeo Paints are a few ways to give it distinction, which collectors tend to gravitate towards. Having that extra touch of authenticity is highly sought after. Before applying the embellishments, prep your painting by adding a layer of matte medium. This acts as an isolation layer and protects the painting. It also gives the surface a bit of tooth. For Pebeo Paints, which is an oil-based iridescent medium with an enamel texture, use a pipette to leave drops of shimmery gold to your finished painting. Make sure to let it dry for at least 48 hours, especially if the application is thick.

9 Glazing, then more glazing

Rendering with acrylics is a slow process for me. I work from light to dark with diluted washes of paint, a technique called glazing. By overlaying layers on top of each other, value is darkened and form is created. A painting usually consists of 50-80 glazes, applied with different watercolour techniques. For broad areas where a soft edge is needed, like a horse's muscular texture, use the wet-on-wet method. For finer details that need crisp edges, like a ribbon, use wet-on-dry.

10 Blending paint strokes

Paint strokes can generate a painting wonderful texture, but there are times when you might prefer to develop a smooth gradient in your artwork. To blend paint strokes, I recommend heavily diluting your paint with water and executing with a light touch. Don't go heavy with the application and be patient as you build value on the paper.

Overlaying glazes upon glazes of paint on top of each other will slowly smooth out the strokes, much like an iron set on a low heat. If the paint strokes are still unyielding, use a pencil in a neutralising colour to gradually blend it away. ➤

11 *Perks of acrylics*

Acrylics are one of the most versatile water-based mediums. Because of this, I can treat it like watercolour, diluting and blending strokes. Unlike watercolour, there's a higher level of permanence in the pigment so it doesn't enable you to lift colour. I prefer this since I'm able to achieve a wide range of value changes.

Like watercolour, you can tint certain areas to add slight colour changes. By mixing a few drops of Golden Hi-Flow acrylics with water, you can bring subtle hints of warmth to a figure's cheeks.

12 *Digitise the finale*

A lot of young artists don't prioritise the importance of digitising the finished painting for future usage. It's key to have a high-resolution digital scan of the final so it can be used for promotional purposes, Giclée prints, licencing rights and many others. For works on watercolour, I recommend using a Cruse scanner. Access to one can be difficult, but try calling your local fine art or large-scale printing company and you may be in luck. It scans the painting without touching the art and is able to capture the nuances of the paint strokes without grainy reflections. If you don't have access to one, an Epson 11000XL is a great second option.

> ❝ **It's key to have a high-resolution digital scan of the final painting** ❞

13 Step by Step: Generating the illusion of form through glazes

1 COLOUR BLOCKING IN ACRYLICS

When starting a painting, dilute your acrylics with water and then block in large areas with flat colour. Afterwards, go over it with more glazes to pinpoint the light source, highlights and shadows. Don't worry about how clean your paint strokes are, because subsequent layers will automatically blend them together.

2 CREATE FORM WITH PENCILS

Now that the general shapes are established, switch to the Verithins. Use the pencils to push the dark areas to create form. Push areas of shadow such as her armpit crease, helices and notches within the ear, and groves between her hair. Make sure to treat your pencil with a light touch so you can add more acrylic washes on top.

3 BLENDING PENCIL AND PAINT

Switch back to acrylics and apply paint strokes over the areas of shadow and coloured pencil. This is where it gets repetitive, switching between the two mediums to achieve a finished look. This method blends the pencil and paint strokes as well as creating soft gradients like the hints of soft peach on her cheek and nose.

14 *Adding a natural edge*

A great way to apply more authenticity to your original piece of work is giving it rough-cut, deckle edges. An easy way to do this is by using a straight-edge ruler to tear your watercolour paper edge as oppose to cutting it with an X-acto knife. It distinguishes the painting as an original piece of artwork and makes it available for unique framing options.

15 *Framing the finished piece*

Painting on watercolour paper has perks. Because it's paper, you can frame it so that it'll showcase its natural deckle edges. A wonderful way to frame artworks on paper is by top float-mounting it in a shadowbox-like frame. The painting is adhered on top of archival foam board to make it appear as if it's suspended in air, with space between all sides of the paper. In my example, I chose a white wooden frame with two-inch rabbet height. To have the painting float-mount like this, you'll need ample depth for all of the different framing components including the glass, mat boards and backing.

I used masking tape when creating the trees that make up the background of my painting Claire de Lune.

Core skills: Part 5
USE MASKS IN YOUR WATERCOLOUR ART

In the final article of her series on painting with watercolour, KELLY MCKERNAN demystifies the process in preserving your paper with masking materials.

One of the most vexing and intimidating elements to working with watercolour involves preserving the white of the paper while painting with the amorphous media.

Watercolour purists will insist that using white watercolour or white ink no longer makes your painting exclusively watercolour. My opinion is that this is silly. What matters in the end is a solid image; however, masking materials exist for those who wish to work traditionally with watercolour. I don't believe masking

materials should ever be a crutch, but they can be a time-saver.

As you develop your skills, you'll also become more efficient with your process. I'm frequently asked if I use masking fluid on the Art Nouveau-esque hair in my paintings. It's very rare that I do, because it takes more time to apply the masking fluid than it does to just carefully paint around the hair. However, if I'm doing a wash over a large area and I don't want the flow interrupted when avoiding an area, so I'll just mask that off.

Truth be told, I really don't enjoy masking in my watercolour paintings

since it can often be frustrating and have a steep learning curve. Many of the masking fluid techniques that I use have been discovered through trial and error. I ended up further developing my painting skills in lieu of depending on masking materials unless they'd save me considerable time. But it might be different for you, so let's have a look at these masking materials and methods!

Kelly creates original paintings for galleries, travels for conventions and mentors students via her Patreon site. See her art at www.kellymckernan.com.

1 An introduction to masking materials

Masking to preserve an area in watercolour is just science. These materials repel water and protect whatever's underneath them, whether it's white paper or an area already painted. The tricky part is learning which materials are appropriate for the job and how to use them.

Grumbacher Miskit Liquid Frisket is my preferred brand of masking fluid. I'll never forget opening a jar in high school and the appalling odour that came forth! Over the years, I've tried a handful of brands and kept returning to this one because it's the most reliable and easy to work with. Stir, don't shake! Air bubbles will affect the consistency of your application.

Brush cleaning soap. I'll use this to coat a brush in a protective layer before using it with masking fluid. Brushes can be easily destroyed by masking fluid if not cared for properly, so I typically use brushes that are already in rough shape for this job.

This is a size 2 Round brush that's already a bit beat up. Coating the bristles with brush cleaner will help to protect it from being further damaged by the masking fluid.

3M Blue Painter's Tape is my go-to for masking tape. I have it in several sizes, and use it for many things in addition to masking.

A toothbrush is handy for splattering tiny dots of masking fluid (and other media, including watercolour, rubbing alcohol and water). I recommend also distributing brush soap into your toothbrush to help preserve it.

This rubber cement Pik-Up eraser is ideal for removing masking fluid. It gets gunky pretty fast, so I cut it up into smaller pieces for extra edges.
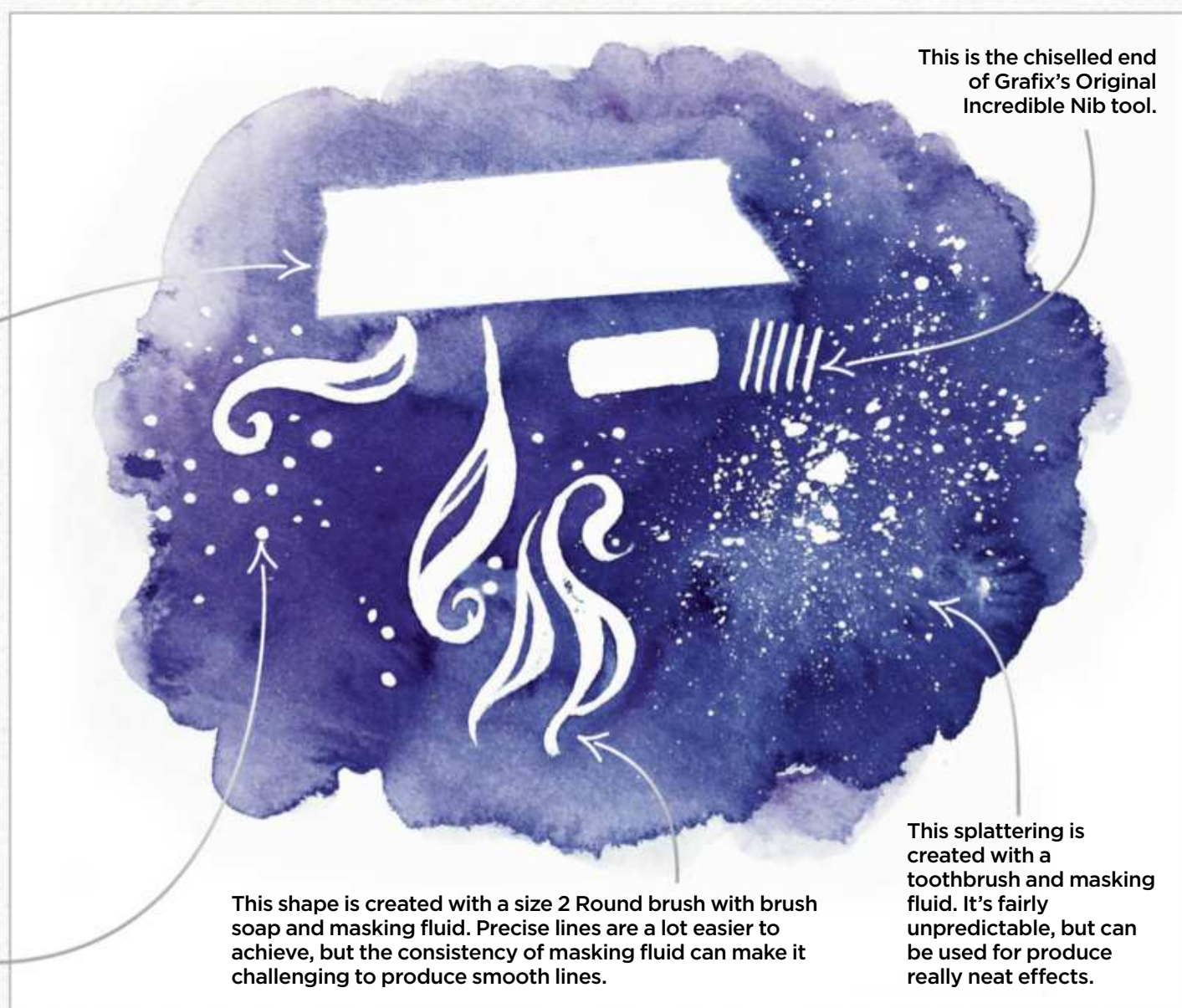
Grafix Original Incredible Nib is a tool with a pointed end and a chiselled end. This is my preferred tool for distributing masking fluid because it clogs up less, although thin lines are difficult to achieve with it.

2 Each tool has a purpose – get to know them!

Of course, a lot of experimentation will need to occur in order to get a comfortable handle on masking materials. Many of your first attempts may not go well, so be sure to practise before applying your masking knowledge to a final painting for the first time.

Masking tape is regularly used for preserving edges of a painting, but it can also be used for masking large areas of a piece by layering in strips, then cutting to a precise shape with a blade. This is not a preferred method for me, but when precise, sharp edges are necessary, the masking tape is my go-to. To help avoid tearing when removing the tape, heat it with a hair dryer as you peel away. I've found that masking tape works best on hot press paper.

The pointed end of the Original Incredible Nib is excellent for consistently sized dots or making long strokes, since it holds the masking fluid slightly better than a brush.

This is the chiselled end of Grafix's Original Incredible Nib tool.

This shape is created with a size 2 Round brush with brush soap and masking fluid. Precise lines are a lot easier to achieve, but the consistency of masking fluid can make it challenging to produce smooth lines.

This splattering is created with a toothbrush and masking fluid. It's fairly unpredictable, but can be used for produce really neat effects.

3 Best practices with masking fluid

When making a decision about what you'd like to preserve in your painting, you'll also need to identify when to apply it. If using masking fluid will save you time in your painting, the next step is to work out when to use it. Writing down steps can help! Let's look at an example of a complicated layering sequence...

For this example, I'm beginning with a simple drawing. I want the hair to have a galaxy effect. Because I know that the hair will be darker than the skin tone, I've decided to paint the skin first.

To keep consistency with a limited palette, I'm using only a few colours: Opera pink, Indigo and Lemon yellow. This is on Arches hot press 140lb watercolour paper.

I know that when I apply the masking fluid with the toothbrush for a splatter effect, it will get on the face, but the dried masking fluid won't harm the painting underneath.

Don't attempt to speed up the drying time of the masking fluid with a hair dryer or any heat, because this will make the latex bond to your paper.

I want to preserve some of the white paper as stars, so I've splattered just a little with the toothbrush and added a few more spots with my Original Incredible Nib tool in selected areas of the image.

To produce the splatter effect, brush your thumb against the bristles away from the paper. If you do the opposite, it'll just get in your face – not a good look.

I'm not being terribly precise with the hair because I plan to paint around it later.

I've now added the first layer of colour – a dusty pink – over the outline of the hair after the first layer of masking fluid spots have dried.

Don't add masking fluid to paper that's anything but bone dry. This makes it a long process of waiting for everything to dry, but adding masking fluid to damp or wet paper will cause it to disperse into the fibres and then become all-but impossible to remove.

Once the first layer of colour is dry, I add a second layer of masking fluid splatters with the toothbrush. In between these layers, I rinse the masking fluid out of the toothbrush and wipe it dry.

4 Layering with masking fluid

We know that masking fluid is usually used to preserve the white of the paper, but it can also be applied to areas you've already painted. This preserves the colour and texture underneath while you put a wash over it, and is a great technique for creating depth or a layering of colour.

In this example, I've added three layers of colour, creating four preserved colour variants of splatters – including the white paper underneath.

After allowing each layer to dry naturally, carefully removing the masking fluid with my rubber cement Pik-Up eraser is incredibly satisfying! Don't use your fingers, because any oils on them can discolour or damage your painting.

If the masking fluid isn't coming up easily, you can apply more on top, allow it to dry, and then try lifting again. For masking fluid that's dried on to a brush, lighter fluid will remove it.

5 Patience is key

Working with masking materials requires patience, but since you're working with watercolour anyway, you're familiar with waiting for things to dry. Rushing the process of working with masking fluid can result in torn paper, misplaced blobs and permanent adhesion. However, when things go as planned, removing your masking materials is like opening up a present!

Experiment with your application for different effects. Sticks, a palette knife, sponges and other tools can be used to apply masking fluid to a painting. You could even use an atomiser!

Remember, the most important thing in the end is that your painting is a good image. It doesn't matter how "pure" your watercolour technique is if the painting can be improved with the use of mixed media. Adding additional white dots with ink or iridescent acrylic paint would make this painting better. Keep experimenting!

First Impressions

✳ Steven Black ✳

From printing with fish to exhibiting on Long Island...

Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?
I grew up in a small town in Ohio. I've later found a ton of artists are from Ohio and I think it's because there's nothing there, so we end up living in our own heads and making things.

What, outside of art, has most influenced your artwork through the years?
Nature. I'm fascinated by fish and patterns in the flora and fauna of the world. I used to go fishing with my dad as a kid and I'd catch fish, ink them up and print them onto cardboard sheets.

You're a child, you see a painting or drawing that changes everything… what are you looking at, and what effect did it have?
It was the work of Salvador Dali and MC Escher, without a doubt. Those two were a huge mind expansion that opened me up to the world.

What was your next step in art? Did other interests vie for your time? What was the deciding factor?
Always wanted to do art. My next step was dividing my time equally

SANDS OF TIME
"This was for the Haven Gallery for the show Time, which was curated by Patrick and Jeannie Wilshire. It was a huge honour to be asked – I love what they do with Illuxcon."

between painters and comic book artists. I was given two gifts as a kid that became life-long obsessions: oil paint and comic books. I was a sickly kid and I stayed in a lot. I remember being really sick and my parents brought me these things to cheer me up.

> ❝ The work of Salvador Dali and MC Escher were a huge mind expansion ❞

LITTLE GHOULIE
"I love precious little small works like this. I see them as intimate little treasures."

Tell us about your first paid commission, Does it stand as a representation of your talent?
My first paid commission occurred on a day when John Jude Palencar called to give me a job that he didn't want and was too busy for. It was for an company's internal magazine cover that I did in ink, and was an image of Moses guarding the gates. It doesn't represent what I do now, but I'm proud that John gave me that first gig.

CARRYING DEATH
"Sometimes I feel like we carry our demons around with and I wanted to visualise that."

What's the last piece you finished and how do the two differ?
The last piece I finished was for the Haven Gallery, in Long Island, New York. Sands of Time depicts a butterfly above a woman who's gradually drifting apart. So it's at the other end of the subject spectrum!

What advice would you give to your younger self to aid you on the way?
All the things you want become possible, so stop waiting and just work at it.

How has the industry of art changed for good since you've been a part of it?
There are no barriers anymore. You can sell directly to collectors and fans and the middle man. The gatekeeper is almost non-existent.

What character or scene that you've painted do you most identify with?
All the ones of people falling apart. Reaching for something and falling short. There's beauty in the struggle. In the doing of a thing.

Steve started his art journey by doing a toned paper drawing once a day for 75 days in a row. Now he's involved in larger projects and gallery work. See more of his art at www.stevenrussellblack.com.